Pre-Optometry Quick Facts

According to the American Optometric Association, Doctors of optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye. You should prepare for a career in optometry by building credentials in scholarship, leadership, humanitarian/community service, and shadowing (with a practicing optometrist) in the various settings of the profession. There is no “best” major for pre-optometry students. Instead you are encouraged to pursue a major in which you are genuinely interested and in which you believe you will excel.

Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

**Advised Pre-OAT**
- **Biology:** BIOL 1107/L & 1108/L
- **General Chemistry:** CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L
- **Organic Chemistry:** CHEM 2211/L
  **(**Many optometry schools do not require the second organic chemistry.
- **Physics:** PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212
- **Biochemistry:** BCMB 3100 or BCMB 4010 & 4020
- **Statistics:** STAT 2000 or BIOS 2010

**Recommended Pre-OAT**
- **Physiology:** (CBIO 2200 and CBIO 2210), VPHY 3100, PMCY 3000, CBIO 3710 **See disclaimer below.
- **Calculus:** MATH 2250
- **Microbiology:** MIBO 3500 or MIBO 3510L or MIBO 3000/L or MIBO 2500/L
- **Genetics:** GENE 3200

**Required Courses**

**DISCLAIMER:** This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need every school. Always check with the individual schools to see their specific requirements. **Anatomy and Physiology Disclaimer:** If a school you are interested in has an anatomy and physiology requirement, you will need to determine what their lab requirements are. If both anatomy and physiology need to have a lab component, you can only satisfy this requirement with CBIO 2200 & CBIO 2210. However, if they only require a single lab or no lab you can opt for the upper division of the courses. Always discuss this with your advisor.

Average Matriculant Numbers

- **Overall GPA:** 3.5
- **Overall Science GPA:** 3.5
- **OAT:** 85th Percentile
  - AA: 322
  - TS: 320

The OAT is required for admission into optometry school and is offered multiple times per year at a cost of $450. Before you can register for the OAT you must secure an OATPIN. You can register for a PIN at ADA.org/OAT. You must register for the test at least 60-90 days in advance. The test is computer based and 5 hours in length. The OAT consists of four tests: Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics and Quantitative Reasoning.

You should plan on taking the exam only once. Retakes are allowed if a desired score is not achieved on the first attempt, but they are limited and should be considered very carefully. Further, you must wait 90 days between test attempts. It is advised you take the OAT before the opening of the admissions cycle at the end of June. Official scores will be reported electronically to your “My Account,” (within 3-4 weeks of your test date) and to the optometry schools you select on your OAT application.

If you have time in your schedule, you should take the advised pre-OAT courses as they will be very helpful for the exam. Commercial prep courses are not required to perform well on the OAT, but they can provide structure for studying. You should always plan to take at least 5-6 full length practice exams since this is the best way to prepare and gauge your progress.

**Typical Optometry Pre-Requisites**
- **General Biology** BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L
- **General Chemistry** CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L
- **Organic Chemistry** CHEM 2211/L **Organic Chemistry II is required for some optometry schools and strongly recommended for others.
- **Physics** PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212
- **Calculus** MATH 2250
- **Statistics** STAT 2000 or BIOS 2010
- **Biochemistry** BCMB 3100 or BCMB 4010 & 4020
- **Psychology** PSYC 1101
- **Microbiology** MIBO 3500 or MIBO 3000/L or MIBO 2500/L **Some optometry schools may require a corresponding lab. If you opt for MIBO 3500 you would need to take the MIBO 3510L to complete the lab requirement.
The numbers matter and so do grade trends. If you wish to enter an optometry program you will require strong science and overall GPAs. Admissions committees also look for trends on your transcript—so all is not lost if you stumble your first semester or two, but then show substantial improvement each subsequent year. However, they will also notice negative trends such as consistently withdrawing from or performing poorly in hard sciences or completing them away from your home institution. While an instance or two is not a deal-breaker, a pattern of behavior will be. You must demonstrate the ability to handle difficult scientific content.

Letters of Evaluation

Selecting your evaluators: The OptomCAS application allows students to upload four letters of recommendation. You will want to check the website of each school to which you plan to apply as requirements do vary between schools. Ideally, you should try to get two letters from hard science faculty, one letter from an optometrist and one professional letter. Professional letters may come from whoever will write the most compelling letter (volunteer coordinator, research mentor, other faculty, employer, etc.). Research mentors do not always count for the science letter, as some schools draw a distinction between mentorship and classroom instruction. However, if you are involved in research, this would make an excellent professional letter. At UGA, it can be difficult to build a close relationship with faculty since many of the science courses are large lectures. You must be mindful of this and do your best to foster a strong relationship to be able to request a letter.

Application Information

Timing in the application process. Applying early minimizes the chances of available interview slots being depleted. Completion and submission of all materials and the end of June enhances the chance of admission for each student. Optometry schools accept students on a rolling basis. Schools continue interviews until the class is filled.

Optometry School Application Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan-May</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feb/March</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April/May</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Last Week of June</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July/August</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senior Year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
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Pre-Health Advising Office