

WHAT IS AN OPTOMETRIST?

Optometrists work to evaluate, improve, and preserve vision. They diagnose and treat certain conditions and diseases of the eye. Depending on the diagnosis, optometrists may prescribe medication, visual training, or corrective lenses. They examine the internal and external structure of the eye, evaluate vision and determine if glasses or contact lenses are needed.

PREREQUISITES:

NOTE: EACH OPTOMETRY SCHOOL ESTABLISHES ITS OWN SET OF PREREQUISITES. CHECK THE WEBSITES OF THE SCHOOLS THAT YOU ARE MOST INTERESTED IN TO OBTAIN A CURRENT LIST OF UNDERGRADUATE REQUIREMENTS.

Listed below are the courses at the University of Dubuque that students must complete to meet the Illinois College of Optometry's prerequisite course requirements for admission.	
Physics (8 credits)	PHY 151 (MATH 112 is a prerequisite for this course.) PHY 152
Math	MATH 250 and MATH 230
Chemistry (8 credits)	CHM 111 (MATH 112 is a prerequisite for this course.) and CHM 112
Organic Chemistry (4 credits)	CHM 221 (CHM 112 is a prerequisite for this course.)
Microbiology (3 credits)	BIO 314
Biological Sciences (8 credits)	BIO 135 General Zoology and BIO 235 Cell Biology * General biology, physiology, zoology and comparative anatomy are all acceptable. Botany does not apply.
Psychology and Social Science (3 credits each)	PSY 110 (or upper-level course) and an economics, political science, anthropology, sociology or an additional psychology course are acceptable for Social Science.
English (6 credits)	ENG 101 and RES 104
<i>Recommended elective courses include: Biochemistry, cellular biology, human anatomy, physiology, genetics, computer science, business, economics, sociology, public speaking and additional psychology courses.</i>	

EXAM AND GPA:

The Optometry Admission Test (OAT) is a standardized examination designed to measure general academic ability and comprehension of scientific information covering four tests: Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics and Quantitative Reasoning. The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) sponsor the OAT for applicants seeking admission to an optometry program. All schools and colleges of optometry in the United States, and the University of Waterloo, Canada, require the OAT. Its purpose is to test the skills and knowledge that have been identified as key prerequisites for success in optometry school and the practice of optometry. It tests your knowledge of science from the required coursework and, therefore, should not be taken until those courses are virtually complete; The best time to take the OAT is during the months immediately following completion of the course requirements. This may be the spring of junior year, the summer after sophomore year, or anytime during senior year or beyond; it will depend on your individual timeline. How you prepare is up to you. The OAT is offered an unlimited number of times in a calendar year; however, applicants must wait 90 days between testing dates. Only scores from the four most recent attempts and the total number of attempts will be reported.

Grade Point Average (GPA): Optometry Schools expect academic excellence. Good grades; typically an undergraduate GPA of 3.3 or better is required to be competitive. Although applicants can matriculate having completed a minimum of 90 semester hours, preferential consideration is given to those who have a degree.

TIMELINE:**Freshman Year:**

- Connect with a Health Professions Advisor or Faculty Member.
- Start taking basic sciences (See chart above).
- Think about possible majors (Study what you love).
- Begin getting involved with volunteer opportunities (campus and community).
- Start shadowing
- Join some student organizations.

Sophomore Year:

- Continue with next sequence of courses.
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities (shadowing, volunteer, etc).
- Begin to think about becoming an officer in your organizations.
- Begin research on professional schools, their requirements, and assess your competitiveness.
- Investigate OAT preparation options.
- Identify programs you are interested in.
- **BOTTOM LINE:** Keep working on the things you established your first year!!

Junior Year:

- Talk to Health Professions advisor or faculty member to narrow program options and assess competitiveness (Fall semester).
- Register for the OAT (Fall Semester).
- Study for OAT and take it (Spring/Summer).
- Identify 3-4 individuals to write letters of recommendation (Spring Semester).
- Complete Application (OptomCAS) (Spring Semester-Summer).
- Schedule a mock interview with Career Services.
- Keep working on the things you have established thus far.

Senior Year:

- Submit Application(s) if you haven't already (Fall semester).
- Wait to be contacted for interviews from veterinary schools.
- Continue with activities and professional experiences/shadowing.
- Talk with an advisor about Plan B if necessary.
- Finish degree requirements and GRADUATE!

RESOURCES:

Illinois College of Optometry [Click Here](#)

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry [Click Here](#)

ASCO OAT Information [Click Here](#)