

Pre-Optometry Education at UO

Academic Advising and Pre-Optometry Objective

Each student has an opportunity to be advised by a Pre-Health Advisor in the Office of Academic Advising. Call 541-346-3211 to schedule an appointment. Please see your academic advisor on a regular basis to confirm you are on track for your degree and Optometry school admission.

In order for the Pre-Health Advisors to communicate directly to you and your interests, it is highly recommended to declare a Pre-Optometry Professional Objective. To do so, email health@uoregon.edu with your name and UO ID number, or fill out a form in the OAA.

You are also encouraged to sign up for the Pre-Health mailing list, which provides students with timely announcements and a monthly newsletter. OAA also has a facebook page, located at www.facebook.com/uo.prehealthadvising, which is where more health information can be found.

Undergraduate Requirements for Optometry School

General Requirements

Most students accepted to a school or college of optometry have earned a bachelor's degree. However, a few schools admit students after a few years of undergraduate education and having met all the prerequisites. All students are urged to plan an academic program leading toward a baccalaureate degree.

Specific Course Requirements

Admission requirements vary between optometry schools; minimum expectations are, however similar. Students are encouraged to review the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry's website (www.opted.org) for a school's specific requirements.

All optometry schools or colleges require the following courses (Contact specific schools for requirements):

- General (or Inorganic) Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Biology
- Physics
- Microbiology
- English Composition
- Calculus
- Psychology

Pacific University has the only optometry school in the state of Oregon.

Recommended University of Oregon Curriculum:

The minimum requirements for admission to Pacific University can be met with the following classes:

- English Composition – WR 122, 122 or 123
- General Chemistry – CH 221, 222, 223 with labs CH 227, 228, 229
OR Honors Chemistry – 224H, 225H, 226H with labs CH 237, 238, 239
- Organic Chemistry – CH 331, 335, 336 with labs CH 337, 338
- General Biology - BI 211, 212, 214.
OR Foundation Biology(H)- BIO 251, 252, 253
A Pre-Health Advisor can assist you in determining which biology sequence you should take.
- Microbiology – BI 330 with lab BI 331
- Calculus - MATH 251 **OR** 246
The need for calculus varies by each school. Check with school to verify if calculus is required or recommended.
- Statistics – MATH 243
- General Physics – PHYS 201, 202, 203 with labs 204, 205, 206

- Anatomy & Physiology – HPHY 321, 322, 323, 324, 325
- General Psychology course - PSY 201 or 202

The Undergraduate Major

The courses described so far consist of only the courses needed to be considered for optometry school, but not as a degree-granting major.

Science Majors

Given the pre-optometry curriculum, the obvious major is someplace in the sciences: chemistry, biology, human physiology and general science dovetail efficiently with the recommended classes. Many of the requirements of those majors are satisfied with the pre-optometry offering. Since major requirements do vary considerably, you should plan your terms in college very carefully in anticipation of a major choice if you have not already committed yourself.

Non-Science Majors

Most optometry schools make a point of welcoming non-science majors. Successful optometry students come from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including majors in English, business, communications, among others. Advisors encourage non-science majors to plan carefully as many of the optometry prerequisites can be taken as electives around a student's major and General Education requirements.

The Major as an Alternative Career

As a pre-optometry student, you should face realistically the possibility of not gaining admission to optometry school. What will you do if you are not accepted? Another health career? Reapply? Follow other pathways within your major? Don't be surprised if you are asked this often by friends, advisors and interviewers. It isn't intended to discourage you but to remind you of the realities of optometry school.

The Pre-Optometry Curriculum

First Year

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term
CH 221 + 227 lab	CH 222 + 228 lab	CH 223 + 229 lab
-or-	-or-	-or-
CH 224H+ 237 lab	CH 225H + 238 lab	CH 226H + 239 lab
MATH 111	MATH 112	MATH (if required for school or major)

Consider:

- Begin Health-Related Experience
- English Composition
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements (if a major has been chosen)

Second Year

BI 211	BI 212	BI 213 -or-
CH 331 + 337 lab	CH 335 + 338 lab	CH 336 ¹
	PSY 202	MATH 243

Consider:

- English Composition (graded)
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements

Third Year

PHYS 201 + 204 lab	PHYS 202 + 205 lab	PHYS 203 + 206 lab
CH 360		BI 330 + 331
BI 214		

Consider:

- English literature
- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes

Fourth Year

HPHY 321	HPHY 323	HPHY 325
HPHY 322	HPHY 324	

Consider:

- Completion of all University and department requirements.
- August - Apply to optometry school
- OAT during early fall.

Comments:

¹ PacificU can substitute CH 360

**This Curriculum is not set in stone. Talk to an Advisor for course plans that are right for you.
Take all prerequisite courses graded.**

Non-Curricular Requirements for Optometry School Admission

The following information can be found at the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry website (www.opted.org) and the Optometry Centralized Application Service (www.optomcas.org).

The Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

The OAT is a standardized test that measures general academic ability and comprehension of the sciences. All schools in the United States require applicants to take the OAT. The test covers the Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics and Quantitative Reasoning. The test is computerized and takes approximately four hours.

Reference Letters

Many optometry degree programs require recommendation letters (otherwise called “letters of reference”). Schools may ask you to submit letters from a professional optometrist, professor, advisor or supervisor. You are encouraged to find individuals who can speak to your maturity, dependability, dedication, compassion, communication skills, leadership and any experience you may have in the field. Check the admission requirements school by school as they may vary considerably.

Extracurricular activities

Optometry schools are looking for a well-rounded individual that has achieved academic success in the classroom in addition to other areas. Extracurricular activities that allow you to develop and enhance your interpersonal communication skills, your leadership skills, your disposition to serve others and your work ethic characterized by dedication and persistence are just a few of the areas schools evaluate your candidacy.

Health-related Experience

Optometry schools encourage if not require students to have either volunteer or paid experience working with patients in a pharmacy or health-related setting. Ongoing work or volunteer opportunities are important factors in the admission process.

Official Transcripts

All Optometry schools require official transcripts from every college you have attended. Although few Optometry schools publicly list mandatory GPAs for admission, accumulated statistics illustrate that only applicants with averages at 3.2 and above stand a good chance of admission. The recent national mean for accepted applicants was 3.29 in all college work.

Take all required courses graded.

In general, you should avoid dropping below a full academic load of 15 or 16 credit hours.

The Application Process

All 20 optometry schools in the U.S. participate in the Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS). A wealth of knowledge about the application process can be found on the OptomCAS website as well as through the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry website.

Of Special Interest

National Statistics for students accepted into Optometry Schools or Colleges according to the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry for Fall 2010:

- National Average GPA accepted applicants – 3.29

Optometry schools are typically 4 years in length, and once school is completed, must pass both a written National Board exam and a National, Regional or State clinical exam.

The average salary for optometrists in 2010 was \$106,750, however this number increases when only looking at optometrists in private practice.

Websites for more information and which provided materials for this handout include:

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
www.opted.org

Pacific University College of Optometry
www.pacificu.edu/optometry

American Optometric Student Association
www.aosa.org

American Academy of Optometry
www.aaopt.org

The Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov

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