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.

Average Matriculant Numbers

- **Overall GPA:** 3.5
- **Overall Science GPA:** 3.6
- **OAT (AA/TS):** 340/340

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: Microbiology MIBO 2500/L or 3500 & 3500L/ 3510L
Genetics: GENE 3200

Join the Pre–Optometry Club

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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.

Required Courses

DISCLAIMER: This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need for 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.

prehealth.uga.edu

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 2500/L or MIBO 3500 **Some optometry schools may require a corresponding lab. If you opt for MBIO 3500 you would need to take MIBO 3500L or MIBIO 3510L to complete the lab requirement.

GPA

Science GPA Calculations: Optometry programs via the OPTOMCAS application use the **BCP** GPA which takes into account **b**iology, **c**hemistry, **p**hysics courses. All attempts at a course will be included in the GPA calculation.

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.

Freshman & Sophomore Year	
Build credentials for optometry school: shadow, volunteer, do research, build relationships with faculty, etc. Do **not** wait until junior year to begin!	
Junior Year	
Fall	Continue shadowing, doing research, volunteering, etc. Draft your personal statement. Study for the OAT
December - May	Register for OATPIN Take OAT
Feb/March/April	Ask for Letters of Evaluation (give letter-writers at least a month to compose)
June	Begin completing OptomCAS Application
Summer	
June	Submit OPTOMCAS (submit as early as possible as optometry schools accept students on a rolling basis – even if OAT score or LOEs are not received)
July/August	Prepare for secondary applications (look online for previous year's questions) Complete secondary applications (within 2 weeks of receiving them)
Senior Year	
Fall	Interview (beginning August/early September through Spring) Continue shadowing, doing research, volunteering, etc.
Spring	Graduate