

# PREOPTOMETRY INFORMATION SUMMARY



## PreProfessional Advising Information

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Make an appt!

## Optometry School Basics

### Optometry School

- Year 1 & 2: Didactic Years (Class Instruction)
- Year 3 & 4: Clinical Rotations

**Optional Residency** (After Optometry School): typically 1 year

### Degree Conferred:

OD (Doctor of Optometry)

Doctors of Optometry examine the eyes and related structures to detect the presence of vision problems, eye diseases and other abnormalities.

**Get involved in activities (in- and outside the classroom) to help you answer the question “why optometry” and prepare you for success in your optometry program and career:**

### Academic Preparation

*Ensure you're academically prepared for the intensity of optometry school*

- A bachelor's degree is not required, but often preferred. Discuss with your PPA advisor.
- Complete optometry school prerequisites
- Competitive applicants have high GPAs, so build and strengthen your time management skills
- Any major is appropriate; make sure to pick the right fit for you, and study what you love!

### Research

*Optometrists depends on professional literature to remain current in their field.*

Most optometry schools highly recommend participation in research. It's good to participate in independent, hypothesis-based research. Your research experience does not have to be medically related or in a lab.

Check out the Office of Undergraduate Research:  
[our.utah.edu](http://our.utah.edu)

### Patient Exposure

*Interacting well with patients is one of the key indicators of a successful healthcare provider.*

The most common way to have this experience is to work at an optometrist's office, which provides direct care to patients.

## Demonstrate your knowledge, skills and preparation

### Shadowing

*This should be one of your first experiences as a preoptometry student.*

Observing optometrists in different environments will help you understand the profession. Shadowing also helps you get to know optometrists; many schools require at least one LOR from an optometrist.

### Extracurricular Activities

#### Leadership & Teamwork

Demonstrate your leadership skills by participating in a variety of experiences leading different people in different situations. No specific hours or number of activities required. (Eg: coach, teacher, tutor, mentor, TA/LA, supervisor, officer role in a club, student advisory board, and many more.)

#### Service to the Community

Interacting with people from different backgrounds and experiences than your own will strengthen your interpersonal and communication skills. No specific hours or number of activities required. Get involved! Visit the Bennion Center [bennioncenter.org](http://bennioncenter.org)

# APPLICATION PROCESS AND INFORMATION

## PPA is here to help!

*Preparing for optometry school is complex and nuanced. But you don't have to do it alone! PPA offers a variety of services to aid you during this time. From application workshops, to application and personal statement reviews, we want to help you with this process. Meet with a premed advisor at least once a semester to help guide you along the way.*

### **Start Saving NOW!**

Applying to optometry school is very expensive. The application fee for OptomCAS is \$185, which includes applying to one school; each additional school is \$75. **These fees will increase each year.** Secondary applications may carry their own fees. Factoring in application fees, OAT prep and registration, the cost of traveling for in-person interviews, and more, we recommend students to prepare to spend a few thousand dollars for the application process. Some programs provide coupon codes that can offset application fees upon submission of your application.

## **APPLICATION DETAILS**

There are currently **24 accredited optometry schools in the US**. State schools give priority to residents, but accept some non-resident applicants. All optometry schools participate in OptomCAS. Standardized application, links to optometry schools, and much more are available on the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry: [optometriceducation.org](http://optometriceducation.org).

Most optometry programs admit students once a year, most commonly for fall matriculation. Your OptomCAS application becomes available in late June each year. Deadlines for most schools are between Jan-May. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply well before the deadline.

### **Do your research!**

It is your responsibility to ensure you are meeting all requirements for the schools you are interested in. When selecting optometry programs, we recommend that you look at schools that align with your interests: location, size, student/faculty ratio, representation, etc.

### **OptomCAS (Optometry Centralized Application Service)**

All US optometry schools utilize [OptomCAS](http://OptomCAS).

- Application requirements include transcripts, extracurricular experiences, personal statement, and fees
- Many schools use a rolling admissions process (meaning they begin reviewing applications and admitting before the deadlines). It will benefit you greatly to *submit your application early*.
- The application will take most students several weeks to complete. Ensure you have plenty of time to fill out the application.

### **Optometry Admission Test (OAT)**

Take the OAT when you have finished the necessary coursework. The OAT is offered at Prometric Test Centers throughout the year, and taking the exam by the spring will allow you to apply earlier. The OAT is divided in four sections: Survey of the Natural Sciences, Reading Comprehension, Physics, and Quantitative Reasoning. Additional information, can be found at [oat.ada.org](http://oat.ada.org).

**COST and PREP:** The exam costs over \$510. There are a variety of ways to prep for taking the OAT. You can purchase a test prep book, utilize free resources online, or purchase a study course.

### **Helpful Resources**

- Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO): [optometriceducation.org](http://optometriceducation.org)
- Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE): [wiche.edu](http://wiche.edu)
- Rocky Mountain University Optometry Program: [rm.edu/od](http://rm.edu/od)

# APPLICATION TIMELINE

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Register, Study, Take the OAT																
Request and Gather LORs																
				Apply		Deadlines Typically Jan-May										
						Supplemental Apps										
										Interviews						
Ideal										Acceptances						
Possible																

## APPLICATION DETAILS

### Letters of Recommendation (LORs)

**PLAN AHEAD:** Optometry schools require LORs as part of your application. Get to know the people you interact with (professors, supervisors, etc.) You're not looking for good letters; you need excellent letters. Get these by building and maintaining your relationships. Letters must be current, signed, dated, and on letterhead. To facilitate this process, use the free OptomCAS 'Letters by Liaison' letter service.

**LETTER TYPES:** OptomCAS allows students to submit a maximum of four letters; at least one is required. The following are common types of letters required by optometry most schools. However, requirements vary by school, so *do your research*.

- **Optometrist** with whom you've worked or volunteered with
- **College Professor** (likely science)

### WICHE: Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education

WICHE enables Utah residents to enroll in out-of-state professional programs at reduced tuition. For more information about WICHE, please visit [wiche.edu](http://wiche.edu). In order to qualify for WICHE you must have been a **resident of Utah for at least five years** when you apply to optometry schools. Apply to WICHE when you apply to optometry schools.

## POLICIES and CONSIDERATIONS

<b>AP/IB CREDIT</b>	Depends on program. If accepted, coursework beyond AP/IB required.
<b>REPEATS</b>	OptomCAS will count all courses in your GPA.
<b>WITHDRAWALS</b>	Although W's will not affect your GPA, W's should be used sparingly. Work with your advisor.

# PreOptometry Prerequisite Course Guide

Requirements vary by school. **It is your responsibility to do your own research on each optometry school you apply to.**  
 AP coursework may or not be accepted. If accepted, coursework beyond AP is often required.

Shaded boxes indicate the classes most commonly required by optometry schools.

**Bolded classes** may be taken at a community college. However, not all optometry schools will accept community college prereqs.

MATH			
<b>MATH 1050 (4)</b> <b>College Algebra &amp; MATH 1060 (3)</b> <b>Trigonometry</b> Can be substituted with MATH 1080 (precalc)	<b>MATH 1070 (3)</b> <b>Statistics</b>  <i>Prereq: See Course Description</i>	<b>MATH 1210 (4)</b> <b>Calculus I</b>  <i>Prereq: MATH 1050 &amp; 1060, or 1080</i>	MATH 1220 (4) Calculus II  <i>Prereq: MATH 1220</i>
Optional Math Prep Course • Math Boot Camp: MATH 10 and MATH 15			

*Please note: Consult both your major and PPA advisor to determine appropriate placement and course selection.*

BIOLOGY					
<b>BIOL 1610 (4)</b> <b>Fundamentals of Biology I</b>  <i>Prereq: MATH 1010</i>	BIOL 2325 (4) Human Anatomy  <i>Prereq: BIOL 1610</i>	BIOL 2420 (4) Human Physiology  <i>Prereq: BIOL 1610 and CHEM 1210</i>	BIOL 2020 (4) Cell Biology *fulfills 2nd bio requirement  <i>Prereq: BIOL 1610 and CHEM 1210</i>	PATH 3100 (3) Medical Microbiology	BIOL/CHEM 3510 (3) Biochemistry  <i>Prereq: CHEM 2310</i> <i>Recommended: CHEM 2320 and BIOL 2020</i>

**BIOLOGY NOTE:** Most optometry schools require two biology labs. BIOL 2325 (Human Anatomy) or BIOL 2425 (Human Physiology lab) can count for one lab at most schools. The second lab can be fulfilled by any other biology lab; BIOL 1615 is one recommended option.

CHEMISTRY				
<b>CHEM 1210 (4)</b> <b>CHEM 1215 (1)</b> <b>General Chemistry I and Lab</b>  <i>PreReq: MATH 1050</i>	<b>CHEM 1220 (4)</b> <b>CHEM 1225 (1)</b> <b>General Chemistry II and Lab</b>  <i>PreReq: CHEM 1210</i>	CHEM 2310 (4) CHEM 2315 (2) Organic Chemistry I and Lab  <i>PreReq: CHEM 1220</i>	CHEM 2320 (4) CHEM 2325 (2) Organic Chemistry II and Lab  <i>PreReq: CHEM 2310</i>	CHEM/BIOL 3510 (3) Biochemistry  <i>PreReq: CHEM 2310</i> <i>Recommended: CHEM 2320 and BIOL 2020</i>
Optional Chemistry Prep Courses • CHEM 1208 (1): Intro to Periodic Table		• CHEM 1200 (4): Prep for College Chemistry • CHEM 2308 (1): Intro to Organic Chem		

PHYSICS				
PHYS 2010 (4) PHYS 2015 (1) General Physics I and Lab  <i>PreReq: MATH 1060</i>	PHYS 2020 (4) PHYS 2025 (1) General Physics II and Lab  <i>PreReq: PHYS 2010</i>	<b>OR</b>	PHYS 2210 (4) PHYS 2215 (1) Physics for Scientists & Engineers I and Lab  <i>PreReq: MATH 1210</i>	PHYS 2220 (4) PHYS 2225 (1) Physics for Scientists & Engineers II and Lab  <i>PreReq: MATH 1220, PHYS 2210</i>

*Please note: Consult both your major advisor and a PPA advisor for the correct lecture and lab sequence.*

OTHER REQUIREMENTS	
Two Semesters Writing (WRTG 2010 and CW)  <i>PreReq: WRTG 1010</i>	One <b>Psychology</b> Course  <i>Check with each program for specifics</i>