

Optometry

What is optometry? “Doctors of optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye. Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases, injuries, and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as identify related systemic conditions affecting the eye” (American Optometric Association [AOA]).

More details? For more detailed information, including salaries and job prospects, visit the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/Healthcare

Can UWW help me prepare for an accredited optometry school? UWW has helped many students prepare for optometry school. There are only 21 schools and colleges of optometry in the U.S. (with 2 more in Canada), making entry into these schools very competitive. You will need to work hard and effectively, and you will need to plan your work with an academic advisor. Profiles of recent incoming classes of dental students may vary by age (average 20-25 years old) and gender (70-30 female-male in 2014), but they are **all** very selective. The average student had a GPA of 3.31/4.00; 95 to 100% have a bachelor’s degree; and the OAT scores are also high (academic average 320, total science average 316).

What do I need to apply for admission to an accredited optometry program or school?

Four schools require a bachelor’s degree before being accepted into their programs and most other programs strongly prefer degree completion; the coursework must be completed at an accredited college or university prior to beginning work in the advanced program. In reality, most students (95-100%) accepted into these programs will have completed a bachelor’s degree. The degree can be in any subject, but due to the substantial science course requirements, most students choose to complete a degree in biology or chemistry.

- 1) **Minimum coursework:** You will need a minimum of 90 semester hours before applying, but since entry is so competitive, completing a bachelor’s degree is strongly recommended.
- 2) **Required courses:** Please check the specific requirements of the program you wish to attend – requirements are fundamentally the same (courses in biology, chemistry, math and physics), but each school has unique specifications – a foreign language may be required or recommended.

Requirement; Length/Credits (minimum)	UWW courses which meet the requirements
Chemistry: min 14-16 credit hours or 1.5 years; general (or inorganic) PLUS at least one semester of organic chemistry	General chemistry: Chem 102 and 104 Organic chemistry: Chem 251 and 252; some schools require one or both labs (261, 262)
Biology: min 6-8 semester hours, introductory courses with labs; all but one require microbiology	General biology: Bio 141 and 142 Microbiology: Bio 311 (pre-reqs Bio 251 and Bio 253)
Physics: 6-8 semester hours (one year series)	Physics 140 and 141
English: 6 semester hours	English 101 and 102
Math: minimum 1 semester college math; most require 1 semester of calculus and stats	Elementary Functions: Math 152 Calculus I: Math 253 Statistics: Psych 215 or Bio 303
Psych: all but one require at least one	Intro Psych: Psych 211

semester of psych	
<p>Electives (general education, for a broad cultural background): If you complete a BS or BA at UWW, the courses recommended by the dental schools in general areas virtually all count toward your Gen Ed requirements here, and vice versa. These courses include general sociology (Soc 240), speech (COMM 110), art (3-D drawing or sculpture), and social sciences courses.</p>	
<p>Science electives generally include at least half of the following: cell biology (Bio 253); genetics (Bio 251); biochemistry (Bio/Chem 456); anatomy and physiology (Bio 361, 362); all of these courses would count toward a degree in Biology.</p>	

- 3) **Entrance exam:** Students need to take the Optometry Admissions Test (OAT).
- 4) **Previous experience of field:** Students need to have explored the real world of optometry and healthcare. Experience may be obtained by job shadowing, internships, volunteer work, and other activities.

UWW Pre-Optometry Student Advisor

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Optometry Schools: Students interested in pursuing training in optometry should visit the American Optometric Association web site (<http://www.aoa.org>) for general information about the field. To find out more about preparing for optometry school, including links to accredited optometry schools and programs and information on the Optometry Admissions Test, visit the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO – www.opted.org).

Training in this area: (IL, MI, MO, IN)

Illinois:

Illinois College of Optometry
Chicago, IL
www.ico.edu

Michigan:

Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI
www.ferris.edu/mco

Missouri:

University of Missouri at St. Louis
St. Louis, MO
<http://optometry.umsl.edu>

Indiana:

Indiana University School of Optometry
Bloomington, IN
www.opt.indiana.edu