Applying to Doctor of Optometry (OD) Degree Programs

Application Information

UTSA does not offer advanced degrees in optometry. However, students are able to take pre-requisite coursework while completing any major at UTSA. Students are encouraged to take coursework in the basic sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and humanities to prepare for their optometry education.

A common timeline for students attending optometry school is shown below:

This timeline is subject to change based on student competitiveness and readiness to apply.

Optometry schools generally use centralized application services for students applying to their programs.

Most Texas schools and out-of-state schools use OptomCAS, which can be accessed at www.optomcas.org.

University of Houston Optometry Pre-requisites

- BIO 1404: Biosciences I (new format, includes lab)
- BIO 1414: Biosciences II (new format, includes lab)
- BIO 3713 & BIO 3722: Microbiology & Lab
- 8 Hours of Upper Division Biology
- BIO 3123: Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy and BIO 3413 + BIO 3422: Advanced Physiology and Lab are preferred
- CHE 1103 & CHE 1121: General Chemistry I & Lab
- CHE 1113 & CHE 1131: General Chemistry II & Lab
- CHE 2603 & CHE 2612: Organic Chemistry I & Lab
- BIO 3513 OR CHE 4303: Biochemistry
- PHY 1603 & PHY 1611: Algebra-based Physics I & Lab
- PHY 1623 & PHY 1631: Algebra-based Physics II & Lab
- STA 1053 OR STA 1403 OR PSY 2073: Statistics
- MAT 1214 or MAT 1193: Calculus
- PSY 1013: Introduction to Psychology

Students are encouraged to take additional coursework to better understand science concepts, social science and public health. Here is a list of some optional Biology electives related to optometry:

- BIO 3013: Introduction to Clinical Medicine
- BIO 3433: Neurobiology
- BIO 3623: Neuropsychopharmacology
- BIO 3713: Microbiology
- BIO 3663: Human Embryology
- BIO 3813: Cellular Biology
- BIO 3913: Molecular Biology
- BIO 4143: Developmental Biology
- BIO 4453: Endocrinology
- BIO 4743: Immunology

Other courses related to medical education, which could benefit a pre-optometry student include:

- ANT 3523: Medical Anthropology
- MGT 4953: Introduction to Health Care Management
- MHU 2013: Introduction to Medical Humanities
- HTH 4503: Human Disease and Epidemiology
- HTH 2413 or SOC 1043: Introduction to Public Health
- SOC 3213: Medical Sociology
- SPN 2513: Spanish for Health Careers
- PSY 4253: Psychology and Health
Admission to optometry schools is becoming increasingly holistic. As such, students are strongly encouraged to participate in optometry-related activities, including community service, working or shadowing in an optometry setting, and involvement on-campus. As optometrists are leaders in the medical field, students are encouraged to develop leadership and teamwork skills.

Ways to get involved:
- UHPO keeps a list of volunteer opportunities in the San Antonio area in our office and on our website, located here: http://www.utsa.edu/healthprofessions/volunteer.html.
- UTSA student organizations participate in service and optometry-related activities. Information about getting involved on-campus can be found on RowdyLink: https://utsa.collegiatelink.net/.
- Students are encouraged to shadow optometrists to gain an understanding of the profession.
- Pre-optometry students are encouraged to apply for leadership roles in their community and/or on-campus to develop necessary communication and teamwork skills.
- Attend UTSA's Health Professions Day, held each February, to meet with representatives from various optometry schools.

Optometry Fast Facts
- There are two optometry schools in Texas. Information about their programs can be found on www.texashotjobs.org.
- Information about out-of-state programs can be found on the Association of Schools and College of Optometry at www.opted.org.
- Optometry Jobs Outlook:
  - Projected 10 year growth: 24%
  - Average annual salary: $113,000
  - Total jobs: 34,000
- More information about job outlook and responsibilities for pharmacists can be found on www.explorehealthcareers.org.
- **Optometrists** are health care professionals who provide primary vision care and are not a medical doctor. **Optometrists** provide vision tests, eye exams and dispense corrective lenses. **Ophthalmologists** have M.D. degrees and are licensed to practice medicine and surgery. **Ophthalmologists** might also fit corrective lenses, give vision tests and treat eye diseases. **Ophthalmologists** often also complete research on eye diseases and vision disorders.

Optometry Admissions Test (OAT)
The OAT is one of the measures used by Optometry Schools to determine a student’s eligibility for admission.

Some general information about the OAT:
- Four Sections:
  1. Natural Sciences:
     - Biology (40 questions): Cell, molecular, developmental, systems, genetics, evolution, ecology, behavior
     - General Chemistry (30 questions): Stoichiometry, Solid/Liquid/Gas, Acids/Bases, Thermodynamics, Kinetics, Atomic Structure
     - Organic Chemistry (30 questions): Mechanisms, Stereochemistry, Acid-Base Chemistry, Aromatics, Bonding
  1. Reading Comprehension (50 questions)
  2. Physics (40 questions): Units, Vectors, Dynamics, Optics, Statics, Energy and Momentum
- Total test time: 4 hours, 50 minutes
- Scores range from 200-400 with a mean of 300.

More information about the OAT can be found on the Examinee Guide: http://www.ada.org/~/media/OAT/Files/oat_examinee_guide.pdf?la=en