



**MEDICAL PROFESSIONS
ADVISEMENT**



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**PRE-OPTOMETRY
GUIDE**

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

44,400

jobs in 2019

46,300

jobs projected in 2029

MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGE

\$118,050

in 2019

for more information, see the Bureau of Labor Statistics
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/optometrists.htm>

The Pre-Optometry track at East Tennessee State University prepares students for application to a four-year Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree program. The majority of students accepted to a school of optometry have completed a bachelor's degree.

CAREERS IN OPTOMETRY

Optometrists examine the eyes and other parts of the body related to vision. They also diagnose, treat, and manage diseases, injuries, and other disorders of the eyes. They prescribe contact lenses or eyeglasses as needed.

Many optometrists own their own practices and may spend a considerable amount of time on general business activities such as hiring employees and ordering supplies.

Some optometrists spend much of their time providing specialized care, particularly if they are working in a group practice with other optometrists or physicians.



ADVISEMENT

PRE-OPTOMETRY IS NOT A MAJOR. Therefore, you must choose a major (and minor, if appropriate) which supports your life goals by the time you earn 60 credit hours. You do not have to major in a science field. Choose a course of study that interests you. Optometry schools look for applicants who are well-rounded, who reason and communicate well, and have demonstrated empathy. It is true that students who have an extensive science background have an easier time with the basic science components of optometry school than do non-science majors. Optometry schools do not assume, however, that you have had any courses other than those required.

We strongly recommend that you meet with your MPA counselor and major advisor each term before registering for the following semester. Students who receive scholarships or participate in specialized ETSU programs (such as athletics or Honors College programs) must also seek advisement from those departments. Serious consequences can occur if students fail to meet with advisors (e.g., failure to graduate on time, missing appropriate courses to prepare for the OAT, etc.).



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET INTO OPTOMETRY SCHOOL?

MINIMUM GPA 3.64-3.21

Average GPAs among admitted students for all schools that reported to the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) in 2019

OAT SCORE 355-284

Highest and lowest average test score among admitted students for all ASCO schools in 2019

ENTRANCE EXAM

The OAT is a computerized exam administered through the Optometric Admission Testing Program. This test is required to be considered for admission to most optometry schools. Examinees are allowed to take the OAT an unlimited number of times but must wait at least 90 days between test dates. Students should not take the OAT until they have completed all prerequisite courses.

CORE PREPARATION COURSES*

Different schools may have varying prerequisite requirements. It is up to the student to research and ensure the required courses are completed before application to the preferred school(s) of interest.

Biology	8 hours	BIOL 1110/11, BIOL 1120/21
General Chemistry	8 hours	CHEM 1110/1111, CHEM 1120/1121
Organic Chemistry	5 hours	CHEM 2010/2011
Physics**	8 hours	PHYS 2010/11, PHYS 2020/21
Biochemistry#	Hours vary	Consult with your Pre-Optometry counselor
English	6 hours	ENGL 1010, 1020
Microbiology	4 hours	HSCI 3320/3321
Calculus	4 hours	MATH 1910
Statistics	3 hours	MATH 1530
Psychology	3 hours	PSYC 1310
Social Sciences	6 hours	Consult with your Pre-Optometry counselor

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED COURSES

Human Anatomy\$	4 hours	HSCI 3000
Human Physiology\$	4 hours	HSCI 3020
Cell Biology	3 hours	BIOL 3150/3151
Organic Chemistry II	5 hours	CHEM 2020/2021

*These Core Preparation Courses are based on Southern College of Optometry, as it is the only optometry school in Tennessee.

**General Physics (PHYS 2010/11 and PHYS 2020/21) may be substituted; however Technical Physics is recommended.

#A two-semester sequence of organic chemistry is a prerequisite for BIOL 4147/57 or BIOL 4167/77. HSCI 3030/3031 is also an option to fulfill Biochemistry requirement.

\$These classes may be required by some optometry schools.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Students are encouraged to begin the application process at the end of their junior year.

All 23 schools and colleges of optometry participate in the Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS), which is online at www.optomcas.org.

Applications are available in late June/early July; however application deadlines vary from December through June for each school. Therefore, it is up to the student to ensure that applications are submitted on time.

Many optometry schools require students to submit a composite letter of evaluation during the application process. The Medical Professions Advisement staff is available to assist students through this process.

SUGGESTED 2-YEAR SCHEDULE FOR PRE-OPTOMETRY STUDENTS

FRESHMAN

Fall

CHEM 1110/11
BIOL 1110/11
MATH 1530
ENGL 1010
PREH 1350

Spring

CHEM 1120/21
BIOL 1120/21
MATH 1720/1910
ENGL 1020
ELECTIVE

SOPHOMORE

Fall

CHEM 2010/11
PHYS 2010/11
SPCH*
PSYC 1310
ELECTIVE

Spring

CHEM 2020/21
PHYS 2020/21
ELECTIVE
ELECTIVE
ELECTIVE

Students should maintain a minimum of 17-19 credit hours per semester

*Consult your MPA counselor before choosing a speech course



MPA COUNSELOR CONTACT
Medical Professions
Advisement Office
423-439-5602

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

WE HAVE 15+ PRE-HEALTH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE 250+ AT ETSU

PRE-OPTOMETRY STUDENT ORGANIZATION (POSO)

POSO is a club designed to help Pre-Optometry students learn about the field, get involved, meet local optometrists, and become competitive applicants to optometry school.

ALPHA EPSILON DELTA HONOR SOCIETY (AED)

AED functions as a health pre-professional honor society encouraging excellence in scholarship. It emphasizes the importance of health education and promotes cooperation and contact among professionals.



Please visit Student Activities and Organizations to find an organization that best fits your goals.

etsucampuslabs.com/engage/organizations

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)

www.ASCO.org

OptomCAS

www.optomcas.org

(the optometry school application portal)

WHAT CAN I BE DOING NOW TO STRENGTHEN MY APPLICATION TO OPTOMETRY SCHOOL?

RELATED EXPERIENCE Students are encouraged to explore the field of optometry either through employment or as a volunteer. Optometry schools want to know that a student has worked in the field, observed what is involved, and still has the desire to continue in that profession. Students should gain as much experience as possible without sacrificing grades.

EXTRACURRICULARS The admissions committees of optometry schools are interested in seeing a range of extracurricular activities, especially those demanding a significant leadership role. Students should demonstrate their ability to balance full academic schedules with extracurricular involvement on and off campus and/or through employment opportunities. ETSU has many organizations that students can join. Students should visit the SAO or www.etsu.edu/students/sao/ for more information regarding extracurricular activities. It is not beneficial to simply join an organization; you must demonstrate leadership!

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE Optometry schools are looking for candidates who express a commitment to service. Students should seek volunteer projects that focus on giving back to the community. Students are encouraged to look for volunteer opportunities related to the optometry field.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE Please consider personal email addresses when corresponding with professional schools. First impressions are often based on correspondence; therefore email addresses should be appropriate for professional communication. Messages and images sent electronically are reflections of judgment and potential suitability for professional careers. Inappropriate behaviors shared on an accessible venue can be viewed and shared by anyone, possibly compromising your chances of admission to optometry school.

WATCH WHAT YOU POST!



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY