

Pre-Health Information for  
**Doctor of Optometry**



Doctors of optometry are independent primary healthcare provider who examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as diagnose related systemic conditions." (American Optometric Association)

<b>Profession web site(s):</b> <a href="http://www.opted.org">www.opted.org</a>
<b>Application web site:</b> <a href="http://www.optomcas.org">www.optomcas.org</a>
<b>Admission/Entrance exam:</b> – OAT (Optometry Admission Test)
<b>Transcripts:</b> Official transcripts from <u>ALL</u> institutions attended, including Marquette University, must be sent directly from the institution to the central application service, OPTOMCAS. If you studied abroad at a U.S. sponsored institution, a transcript from the U.S. schools should be sent to OPTOMCAS. If you studied abroad at a foreign institution, you should contact the OPTOMCAS office directly at the time of application.
<b>Course prerequisites:</b> Course prerequisites vary by program. Typical prerequisites include Biology 1001/1002, a separate lab course such as Biology 2001, Chemistry 1001/1002, and Physics 1001/1002. Different course numbers for majors (e.g., Chemistry 1014 for Majors) will be accepted. Common pre-requisites vary by school but often include calculus (Math 1410 or 1450), anatomy (BISC 2135), physiology (BISC 4145 or BIOL 3701), organic chemistry (CHEM 2111/2112, some schools don't require both), biochemistry (BISC 3213 or BIOL 4101), microbiology with a lab course (BIOL 3801/3802 or BISC 3115/4165), statistics (Math 1700 or Psych 2001), and psychology (Psych 1001).
<b>Observation hours/experience:</b> Optometry schools like to see well-rounded applications and look for quality and depth of experiences rather than requiring a specific number of hours. Direct exposure to optometry, either volunteer or paid, shadowing, leadership, service to others, and research are all recommended experiences to become competitive for optometry school. Optometry schools tend to favor students with more clinical experience, service, a clear understanding of optometry and a demonstrated commitment to the profession.
<b>Minimum requirements to apply:</b> The GPA range for acceptance to optometry schools is 3.28-3.92. At Marquette, we find that students with about a 3.2 GPA or higher can be academically competitive. OAT scores are also important, as well as activities, experiences, and other factors.
<b>Letters of Reference (LOR):</b> Letters of recommendation are sent directly from the evaluator to the OPTOMCAS portal. Applicants enter their evaluators' information, and evaluators receive an email prompt immediately from the OPTOMCAS portal. Requirements vary by school, but in general, we recommend obtaining letters from two science professors whom you have had for class and one non-academic letters, preferably from an optometrist with whom you have shadowed/worked who can attest to your interest in and dedication to the field. We recommend that you check each school to which you are applying for information on specific requirements for letters.
<b>Personal Statement:</b> A personal statement is a written reflection on why you want to be an optometrist and why you think you would be a good one. Particular emphasis should be placed on why you are choosing optometry. Character limits can be found on the OPTOMCAS website, but the limit is typically about one page single-spaced.
<b>Interview:</b> Competitive applicants may be invited to participate in an interview process. Interviews may include faculty members, current students of the program, and/or practicing optometrists. Interviews may be used to assess oral communication skills; professional behaviors; attitude; knowledge of optometry and/or of health care overall; problem-solving skills; passion for pursuing optometry, etc. Go to your interviews with prepared questions about the school/program that show your interest in what the school has to offer.
<b>Deadlines:</b> Timing is important with optometry school admission. The centralized application service for optometry schools, OPTOMCAS, opens in July. Application submission deadlines vary, but range from December to June. A student who wishes to attend optometry school the August after graduation should start the OPTOMCAS application in July/August prior to senior year, and finish applications in the fall of senior year.
<b>Data for Accepted Students (2012 Application Cycle):</b> <b>Average UG GPA range: 3.28-3.92</b>

