

PRE-OPTOMETRY RESOURCES



CAREER CENTER

GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

This handout is designed to provide students a general guide to applying to optometry programs. For further assistance, please schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor.

110 Lanier Hall | 478-445-5384 | career.center@gcsu.edu
gcsu.joinhandshake.com

QUICK FACTS

Optometrists are a primary eye care provider who examines, diagnoses, treats, and manages diseases and disorders of the visual system. Only a few schools offer degree programs for a **Doctor of Optometry (OD)**.

Here are some things for optometry applicants to consider:

- Applications usually require some combination of these materials: **minimum GPA, Optometry Admission Test (OAT) scores, letters of recommendation, a personal statement, a cover letter, a secondary application, and an interview.**
 - In order to verify program details, you will need to visit each application site.
- The application process for optometry programs differs from that of medical schools. When reviewing school options, keep in mind that schools are extremely competitive.
- Pursue **recommended medical related courses** in addition to the required prerequisites. Also seek out **research opportunities with faculty.**
- The number of shadowing or observation hours **vary from program to program**, with some requiring specific hours, and others strongly suggesting them.
- Additional applications are required by most optometry programs for their specific school. They vary in information requested and could include **work history, detailed shadowing/observation experiences, or have question and answer prompts, and most often require a fee.**
- Visit the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)'s website for additional information on applications, shadowing opportunities, specific programs, and other FAQ's: optometriceducation.org/.

COMMON APPLICATION SERVICES (OPTOMCAS)

Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS)

- Many schools require your application to be submitted through this system. You can find more information here: optomcas.org/.
- An account has to be made to utilize this application service. **Familiarize yourself with the site, the applications themselves, and what materials are necessary for each application.**
- **Keep in mind that not all schools use OptomCAS!** Thoroughly read through each program's admission procedures.

OPTOMETRY ADMISSION TEST (OAT)

Optometry Admission Test (OAT) is an admissions exam required for most optometry school applications. It is designed to assess your **science skills**, as well as your **reading comprehension** and **quantitative reasoning skills**.

- Be sure to take the test in enough time to make the application deadlines. **It is recommended you take the test early in the spring of your junior year.**
- You can take the test as often as you feel necessary. Your scores will remain valid for **three years**.
- **Kaplan** has a breakdown of the test and answers FAQs (www.kaptest.com/oat/what-is-the-oat).
- The **Optometry Admissions Test site provides information about studying, cost, and applying for the test can be found at oat.ada.org/.**

COMMON PREREQUISITES

Principles of Biology I & II
Microbiology
Principles of Chemistry I & II
Organic Chemistry I
Biochemistry
English Composition I & II

Calculus I
Probability and Statistics
Introductory Physics I & II
Intro to General Psychology
Cellular and Molecular Physiology
Human Anatomy and Physiology

***This is not an exhaustive list. Please research each program's requirement, and please consult with your academic advisor prior to registering.**

KEY NUMBERS

- Average GPA: **3.44**, Accepted Average: **3.56**
- Average OAT Score: **323**
- Average Minimum Observation/
Shadowing Hours: **10-40**

***Check with each individual school for their GPA and score requirements.**

****Keep in mind that quality outweighs quantity when obtaining hours.**

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APPLICATION ESSAY PREPARATION

Personal statements used to apply to schools through OptomCAS should be general and not program specific.

- Pay attention to the character count (including spaces) allotted for the essay.
 - OptomCAS allows for a **4,500 character limit**.
- OptomCAS asks that you **“Please describe what inspires your decision for becoming an optometrist, including your preparation for training in this profession, your aptitude and motivation, the basis for your interest in optometry, and your future career goals.”**
- You should start writing your personal statement early, and follow the instructions listed carefully to ensure you follow all the parameters set.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

When preparing for professional school interviews, it is important that you practice ahead of time.

- Utilize resources in **Handshake** and **book an appointment with a Career Advisor to further assist you.**
- **“Why do you want to be an optometrist?”** or **“Why our program?”** are common types of questions that you want to prepare for.
- Develop **in-depth responses** to interview questions that are specific to you and how you fit into the program you’re applying for.
- There are different types of interviews for dental school such as **traditional interviews, group interviews, mixed multiple interviews (MMI)**; with MMI’s becoming more popular.
- The **Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)** provides **[interview resources for optometry school applicants](https://www.optometriceducation.org/interview-resources-for-optometry-school-applicants)**, ([optometriceducation.org](https://www.optometriceducation.org)).

PRE-OPTOMETRY AT GCSU

Students at Georgia College interested in pursuing a career in optometry can find guidance and resources to help them prepare for optometry school and the profession. While there is no specific pre-optometry major, students from academic backgrounds such as biology, chemistry, and health sciences can successfully apply to optometry programs with thoughtful planning. **The STEM Club** is a great way for pre-optometry students to get involved on campus, connect with like-minded peers, and explore various healthcare and science-related fields.

RESOURCES

ASCO:

<https://optometriceducation.org/>

ASCO: Profile of the 2024 Optometry Entering Class:

<https://optometriceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ProfEnteringClass2024upd10-14.pdf>

ASCO: The Optometry Admission Test (OAT):

<https://oat.ada.org/>

Georgia State Board of Optometry:

<https://sos.ga.gov/georgia-state-board-optometry>

Kaplan: What is the OAT?:

<https://www.kaptest.com/oat/what-is-the-oat>

OptomCAS:

<https://www.optomcas.org/>

OptomCAS: Applicant Data Report (2023-2024):

<https://www.optomcas.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/OptomCAS-Applicant-Data-Report-2023-2024.pdf>

OptomCAS: Applicant Login:

<https://optomcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>

OptomCAS: Filling Out Your OptomCAS Application:

https://help.liaisonedu.com/OptomCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Filling_Out_Your_OptomCAS_Application