Pre-Optometry Prerequisites and Timeline for Application

Idaho State University | Kasiska Division of Health Sciences

How to use this document:

- These are the common prerequisites for optometry schools and for preparations to take the OAT or GRE. Check individual programs for exact requirements.
- Take these classes (according to prerequisites). Work with a pre-health advisor to determine correct sequencing.
- This page demonstrates the prerequisites, you may choose to take two to four years – whatever amount of time fits best for your plan.
- Add major classes along with pre-optometry prerequisites
- Pay close attention to sequences, prerequisites and when classes are offered
- Your major can be in any field as long as you have the classes to prepare you for an optometry program – Choose your major by your greatest field of interest.

Course Subject and Title	Credits	Offered	Pre & Co Requisites
BIOL 1101/L General Biology I and Lab	4	F,S,Su	Must place into MATH 1108
BIOL 1102/L General Biology II and Lab	4	F,S	BIOL 1101/L
BIOL 2221/L Introductory Microbiology and Lab OR BIOL 2235/L General Microbiology and Lab	4	F,S,Su F,S	CHEM 1101 or CHEM 1111/L, BIOL 1101/L or BIOL 2227/L BIOL 1101/L, BIOL 1102/L, CHEM 1112/L
BIOL 3301/L Advanced Human Anatomy and Physiology I and Lab	4	F,S	BIOL 1101/L or BIOL 2227/L
BIOL 3302/L Advanced Human Anatomy and Physiology II and Lab	4	F,S	BIOL 1101/L or BIOL 2227/L
BIOL 4432 Biochemistry	3	F,S	BIOL 1101/L, CHEM 3301
CHEM 1111/L General Chemistry I and Lab	5	F,S	MATH 1143 or 1147 (recommended – CHEM 1101)
CHEM 1112/L General Chemistry II and Lab	4	F,S	CHEM 1111/L
CHEM 3301/3303 Organic Chemistry I and Lab	4	F	CHEM 1112/L
CHEM 3302/3304 Organic Chemistry II and Lab	4	S	CHEM 3301
MATH 1160/MATH 1170 Calculus	3/4	F,S/F,S,Su	MATH 1143/MATH 1147
PHYS 1111/L General Physics I and Lab	4	F	MATH 1143 or 1147
PHYS 1112/L General Physics II and Lab	4	S	PHYS 1111/L
PSYC 1101 Introduction to Psychology	3	F,S	
For College of Optometry Application			
Take the OAT or GRE – Receive OAT unofficial test scores after the test, receive official test scores 3-4 weeks after test date; receive GRE scores 10-15 days after test date			
Important! For retesting – There must be at least 90 days between attempts			
Prior to Application Process – Research programs you wish to apply to			
3-6 months prior to application – Begin drafting personal essay and finding letter writers			
OptomCAS Application			
At least 3 months prior to deadline – Create your account and complete the "Colleges Attended" and "Letters of Recommendation" sections			
10-12 weeks prior to deadline – Ask your schools to send official transcripts directly to OptomCAS; check to make sure letter writers received requests			
6-8 weeks prior to deadline – Complete and submit your application; monitor your application for receipts of transcripts and letters of recommendation			
4-6 weeks prior to deadline – Continue monitoring your application until your status is verified			
After deadline – Download a copy of your application for your records			
Reach out to your programs to learn about school's admissions decisions			

What else do you need?

- Undergraduate degree
  - Major – complete all requirements for major
  - General Education Requirements
- Shadowing Optometrists
  - Develop a resume and cover letter to leave at a optometry office asking for an opportunity to shadow
  - Contact others who have shadowed and find out how they made the connection
  - Use your own networking and connections, both personal and professional
  - You may need to contact many optometrists before finding someone who has time/space for a student
- Experience
  - All paid and unpaid optometric experience with the exception of shadowing and volunteer experience
  - Any other relevant healthcare experience or patient care experience
- Volunteer
  - Can be in a healthcare setting or another setting
  - Shows dedication to helping others in your community, and in healthcare settings
- Research
  - More important for some schools than others
  - Talk to your advisor or instructors for help in finding research opportunities
- Letters of Recommendation
  - At least one letter from a science professor, one letter from an optometrist or ophthalmologist
  - Consult with your pre-health advisor to determine additional letters of recommendation
- Leadership
  - Healthcare or non-healthcare setting, students are encouraged to be creative
  - Shows that you are a strong member of a team
  - Showing leadership will make you stand out from other applicants and show you are actively preparing for your future in your career and community
- Attributes
  - Investigative
  - Communicative
  - Attentive
  - Patience
  - Compassionate
  - Friendly

Helpful links:
OptomCAS: https://www.optomcas.org/
AOA: https://www.aoa.org/?sso=y
ASCO: https://optometriceducation.org/
OAT: https://www.ada.org/en/oat
GRE: https://www.ets.org/gre/
Pre-Health at ISU – isu.edu/hpac
OptomCAS Applicant Help Center: https://help.liaisonedu.com/OptomCAS_Applicant_Help_Center