

# Pre-Optometry Quick Facts



**Pre-Health Advising**  
Pre-Professional Advising Office  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

According to the American Optometric Association, Doctors of Optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye. You should prepare for a career in optometry by building credentials in scholarship, leadership, humanitarian/community service, and shadowing (with a practicing optometrist) in the various settings of the profession. There is **no “best” major** for pre-optometry students. Rather, you are encouraged to pursue a major in which you are genuinely interested and in which you believe you will excel.

## Average Matriculant Numbers

- **Overall GPA:** 3.5
- **Overall Science GPA:** 3.6
- **OAT (AA/TS):** 340/340

## Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

### Advised Pre-OAT

**Biology:** BIOL 1107/L & 1108/L

**General Chemistry:** CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L

**Organic Chemistry:** CHEM 2211/L

\*\*Many optometry schools do not require the second organic chemistry.

**Physics:** PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212

**Biochemistry:** BCMB 3100 or BCMB 4010 & 4020

**Statistics:** STAT 2000 or BIOS 2010

### Recommended Pre-OAT

**Physiology:** (CBIO 2200 and CBIO 2210), VPHY 3100, PMCY 3000, CBIO 3710 \*\*See disclaimer below.

**Calculus:** MATH 2250

**Microbiology:** Microbiology MIBO 2500/L or 3500 & 3500L/ 3510L

**Genetics:** GENE 3200

The OAT is required for admission into optometry school and is offered multiple times per year. Before you can register for the OAT you must secure an **OATPIN**. You can register for a PIN at ADA.org/OAT. You must register for the test at least 60-90 days in advance. The test is computer based and 5 hours in length. The OAT consists of four tests: **Survey of the Natural Sciences** (*Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry*), **Reading Comprehension**, **Physics** and **Quantitative Reasoning**.

You should plan to take the exam only once. Retakes are allowed if a desired score is not achieved on the first attempt, but they are limited and should be considered very carefully. Further, you must wait 60 days between test attempts. It is advised you take the OAT before the opening of the admissions cycle at the end of June. Official scores will be reported electronically to your “My Account,” (within **3-4 weeks** of your test date) and to the optometry schools you select on your OAT application.

If you have time in your schedule, you should take the advised pre-OAT courses as they will be very helpful for the exam. Commercial prep courses are not required to perform well on the OAT, but they can provide structure for studying. You should always plan to take at least 5-6 full length practice exams since this is the best way to prepare and gauge your progress.

## Join the Pre-Optometry Club



@UgaPreOptometry



preoptometry@gmail.com

## Required Courses

**DISCLAIMER:** This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need every school. Always check with the individual schools to see their specific requirements. For example, some schools require additional social science credits.

**Anatomy and Physiology Disclaimer:** If a school you are interested in has an anatomy and physiology requirement, be sure to check if they also require labs with these courses before determining the correct courses to take. Always discuss prerequisites with your advisor.

### Typical Optometry Pre-Requisites

**General Biology** BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L

**General Chemistry** CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L

**Organic Chemistry** CHEM 2211/L (2<sup>nd</sup> level typically not required)

**Physics** PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212

**Calculus** MATH 2250

**Statistics** STAT 2000 or BIOS 2010

**Biochemistry** BCMB 3100 or BCMB 4010 & 4020

**Anatomy and Physiology** Taking both CBIO 2200 and CBIO 2210 will satisfy requirements at most schools (see disclaimer)

**Psychology** PSYC 1101

**Microbiology** MIBO 2500/L or MIBO 3500 \*\*Some optometry schools may require a corresponding lab. If you opt for MIBO 3500 you would also need to take MIBO 3500L or MIBO 3510L

[ppao.uga.edu](http://ppao.uga.edu)

## GPA

**Science GPA Calculations:** Optometry programs via the OPTOMCAS application use the **BCP** GPA (**b**iology, **c**hemistry, **p**hysics). All attempts at a course will be included in the GPA calculation.

## Letters of Evaluation

**Selecting your evaluators:** The OptomCAS application allows students to upload four letters of recommendation. You should check the website of each school to which you plan to apply as requirements vary between schools. In general, you should get two letters from hard science faculty, one letter from an optometrist, and one professional letter. Professional letters may come from whomever will write the most compelling letter (volunteer coordinator, research mentor, other faculty, employer, etc.). Research mentors do not always count for the science letter, as some schools draw a distinction between mentorship and classroom instruction. However, if you are involved in research, this would make an excellent professional letter. At UGA, it can be difficult to build a close relationship with faculty since many of the science courses are large lectures. You must be mindful of this and do your best to foster a strong relationship to be able to request a letter.

**The numbers matter and so do grade trends.** If you wish to enter an optometry program you will require strong science and overall GPAs. Admissions committees also look for trends on your transcript—so all is not lost if you stumble your first semester or two, but then show substantial improvement each subsequent year. However, they will also notice negative trends such as consistently withdrawing from or performing poorly in hard sciences or completing them away from your home institution. While an instance or two is not a deal-breaker, a pattern of behavior will be. You must demonstrate the ability to handle difficult scientific content.

## Application Information

**Timing in the application process.** Applying early minimizes the chances of available interview slots being depleted. Completion and submission of all materials and the end of June enhances the chance of admission for each student. Optometry schools accept students on a rolling basis. Schools continue interviews until the class is filled.

### Freshman & Sophomore Year

Build credentials for optometry school: shadow, volunteer, do research, build relationships with faculty, etc.  
Do **not** wait until junior year to begin!

### Junior Year

Fall	Continue shadowing, doing research, volunteering, etc. Draft your personal statement. Study for the OAT
December - May	Register for OATPIN Take OAT
Feb/March/April	Ask for Letters of Evaluation (give letter writers at least a month to compose)
June	Begin completing OptomCAS Application

### Summer

June	Submit OptomCAS (submit as early as possible as optometry schools accept students on a rolling basis – even if OAT score or LOEs are not received)
July/August	Prepare for secondary applications (look online for previous year's questions) Complete secondary applications (within 2 weeks of receiving them)

### Senior Year

Fall	Interview (beginning August/early September through Spring) Continue shadowing, doing research, volunteering, etc.
Spring	Graduate