

Optometry

- Optometrists are professionals who specialize in problems associated with the eyes and vision. They examine patients' eyes for visual issues and manage other problems or diseases that are eye-related. Optometrists are also qualified to prescribe glasses and contact lenses for patients, and they can treat patients with various medications for eye conditions. Optometrists also work with patients to help them decide between treatment options, and they can perform various surgical procedures. Additionally, optometrists can specialize in different areas of optometry such as pediatric or low vision optometry.
- The working environment of an optometrist varies. Generally, working conditions are pleasant. Many optometrists work in their own private optometry offices, but others find employment in hospitals, retail stores, and clinics. Optometrists often work alongside other optometrists if they are working in a clinic or a group practice. Since many optometrists have their own practices, they also manage employees and perform the duties of office managers including scheduling, payroll accounting, and the ordering of supplies.
- The schedule of an optometrist is generally full time, and although most work regular office hours, Monday through Friday, some clinics are open during the evening and on weekends. Therefore, optometrists' schedules may vary.
- Since they deal with patients all day, prospective optometrists should enjoy working with the public and possess a caring and compassionate nature when meeting with patients and explaining procedures to them. They also need to possess a strict attention to detail which will be useful when performing intricate eye procedures. An aptitude for business management is important as well since many optometrists will be running their own businesses.
- **Optometrist Duties**
 - On a daily basis, [optometrists optometrists] might perform the following duties:
 - Diagnose vision problems
 - Provide pre-operative and post-operative care
 - Perform tests on the eyes
- **How To Become An Optometrist**
 - To become an optometrist, one must complete at least three years of undergraduate coursework in science, math, and other general education classes, take the Optometry Admission Test, gain acceptance into a Doctor of Optometry program, and then pass a national licensing exam.

- **How Long Does It Take To Become An Optometrist?**
 - It will take between 7-9 years to become an optometrist. The first three or four years will be spent completing undergraduate coursework, then one can expect to spend another four years in optometry school. After finishing school, many graduates choose to complete an internship program in a specialized field which will take one more year.
- **Education Requirements**
 - Although a bachelor's degree is not needed to gain acceptance to a Doctor of Optometry program, many students opt to complete a four year degree. If students do not choose the path of a bachelor's degree, they must have completed at least three years of undergraduate coursework, including prerequisites in science and math to gain entrance into an optometry program. Since there are only 17 accredited optometry programs in the United States, admission to optometry programs is extremely competitive; therefore, undergraduate grades, letters of recommendation and Optometry Admission Test scores are important.
 - Once accepted into a program, students will spend a good deal of time in class, taking numerous courses in such areas as pharmacology, optometric theory, and ocular anatomy. There is also a clinical phase of optometry school which involves completing an externship during the last year of the program. Students will work in clinical settings such as doctors' offices and clinics, gaining experience in areas such as pediatrics, specialty contact lenses, and primary-care practice.
- **Certification**
 - Optometrists can obtain certification through the American Board of Optometry. Although not required, certification can instill confidence in patients who want an optometrist with expertise and knowledge beyond the minimum requirements.
- **Licensing**
 - Optometrists must be licensed in all fifty states. The process to become licensed involves receiving a doctor of optometry degree from an accredited school and then taking the National Board of Examiners in Optometry exam. The exam consists of several parts, and all parts must be passed before an optometrist can become licensed.
 - In addition to the national licensing, many states have individual requirements. Therefore, it is a good idea to check with the state where a prospective optometrist wishes to practice.
- **Job Outlook**
 - The job outlook for optometrists from 2012-2022 is excellent. The field is expected to grow at a faster than average rate. As many as 8100 new positions in

optometry will be created during those years which is a 24% percent increase. As the population ages, so too will their need for optometry services, and that will create a demand for more optometrists. There is also an increase in chronic diseases that require optometry care, and new insurance legislation will enable more people to obtain optometry services. Recently, more of the population are realizing the importance of eye health, and this is also increasing the need for optometrists. In addition, many older optometrists will be retiring, which will open up more jobs for those just entering the field.