

# Pre-Optometry Quick Facts



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

“Doctors of optometry (ODs) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye” (American Optometric Association (AOA)). Students 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 nor are there majors that will make a student “stand out.” Students are encouraged to pursue majors in which they are most interested.

## Average Matriculant Numbers

- Overall GPA: 3.5
  - Science GPA: 3.5
  - OAT: 85<sup>th</sup> Percentile
- AA: 322    TS: 320

## Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

### Required 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

\*\*Biochemistry Majors: discuss with your biochemistry major advisor the BCMB 4010-4020 sequence

**Statistics:** STATS 2000

### Recommended Pre-OAT

**Genetics:** GENE 3200

\*\*Genetics recommended for OAT prep (not required).

**Physiology:** VPHY 3100, PMCY 3000, CBIO 3710

\*\*See disclaimer below.

**Calculus:** MATH 2250

**Microbiology:** MIBO 3500 & MIBO 3510L or MIBO 3000/L or MIBO 2500/L

The OAT is required for admission into optometry school and is offered multiple times per year at a cost of around \$435. Prior to registration for the OAT, an **OATPIN** must be secured. You can register for a PIN at ADA.org/OAT. Applicants must register for the test at least 60-90 days in advance. Each testing center has a limited number of seats that can be offered on any given day. The test is computer based and over 4 hours and 50 minutes 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**.

Students should plan on taking the exam only once. Retakes are possible if a desired score is not achieved on the first attempt. There is a 90-day mandatory wait to retake the OAT; therefore, it is advised that the OAT be taken before the opening of the admissions cycle on July 1. The last date to take the OAT for any admissions cycle is March 1st. Official scores will be reported electronically to you “My Account,” (within three to four weeks of your test date) and to the optometry schools you select on your OAT application.

If students have time in their schedules, they should consider taking some of the recommended pre-OAT courses. However, students do not need to go out of their way to complete these courses prior to taking the OAT.

Commercial prep courses are not required to perform well on the OAT, but they can provide structure for studying.

## 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. **Anatomy and Physiology Disclaimer:** If a school where you want to apply has an anatomy and physiology requirement, there are two ways to satisfy that requirement at UGA. The elements you must determine are if the school’s requirement can be satisfied by one or two semesters and if there is a lab attached to the requirement. Students should discuss satisfying the requirement with the school in question prior to taking the course.

## Typical Optometry Pre-Requisites

**General Biology** (2 semesters w/labs) BIOL 1107/L or 2107/L and BIOL 1108/L or 2108/L

**General Chemistry** (2 semesters w/labs) CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L

**Organic Chemistry** (1 semesters w/lab) CHEM 2211/L \*\*Organic Chemistry II is required for some optometry schools and strongly recommended for others.

**General Physics** (2 semesters w/lab) PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212

**Calculus** (1 semester) MATH 2250

**Statistics** (1 semester) STAT 2000

**Biochemistry** (1 semester) BCMB 3100

**Psychology** (1 semesters) PSYC 1101

**Microbiology** (Microbiology (MIBO 3500 & MIBO 3510L or MIBO 3000/L or MIBO 2500/L) \*\*Some optometry schools may require a corresponding lab.

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

## GPA Expectations

**Science GPA Calculations:** Optometry programs via the OPTOMCAS application use the **BCPM** GPA which takes into account **b**iology, **c**hemistry, **p**hysics, and **m**athematics courses. All attempts at a course will be included in the GPA calculation.

## Letters of Evaluation

**Selecting your evaluators:** Individual optometry schools are quite specific in the types of letters of evaluation they expect. All student candidates should familiarize themselves with the types of letters of recommendations for all the schools where they intend to apply. Within their four allowed letters (at least one of those from an optometrist), students should construct a combination of letters that meet the requirements of all their schools. Research mentors do not always count for the science letter, as some schools draw a distinction between mentorship and classroom instruction. At UGA, it can be difficult to build a close relationship with faculty since the introductory science courses are usually large lecture classes. Students must be mindful of this and do their best to foster a good enough relationship to be able to request a letter.

**Join the Pre-Optometry Club of AED**

<http://aed.uga.edu/Officers.htm>

**The numbers matter and so do grade trends.** Students who want to enter an optometry program will require strong science and overall GPAs. Admissions committees do look for trends on a student's transcript, so all is not lost if a student stumbled in their first semester or two, but then showed substantial improvement finishing out with a solid GPA. However, they will also notice negative trends such as if a student is consistently withdrawing from or performing poorly in hard sciences or is taking them away from the home institution. While an instance or two is not a deal-breaker, a pattern of behavior will be. Students must demonstrate the ability to handle difficult scientific content.

## Application Information

**Timing in the application process.** Applying early to a school that receives thousands of applications each year from the entire nation is of utmost importance to minimize the chances of available interview slots being depleted. Completion and submission of all materials in July enhances the chance of admission for each student. Optometry schools accept students on a rolling basis. Schools continue interviews until the class is filled.

# Optometry School Application Timeline

Junior Year	
<b>Fall</b>	Shadow/Volunteer Register for OATPIN Register and study for OAT (will need OATPIN to register)
<b>Spring</b>	Write Personal Statement Ask for Letters of Evaluation Begin preparing for the OAT. Begin a study regime early. Test should be taken before OptomCas opens in July.
Summer	
<b>April/May/June</b>	Take OAT
<b>July</b>	Admissions cycle opens on July 1 <sup>st</sup> (Complete you OptomCAS application). Schools extend supplemental applications as the students' applications are delivered to them through OptomCAS. Some schools begin interviews.
<b>August/September</b>	Schools continue interviews as seats are still available.
Senior Year	
<b>Fall</b>	Interview (Schools continue interviews as seats are still available). Shadow/Volunteer
<b>Spring</b>	Graduate

