

PRE-OPTOMETRY

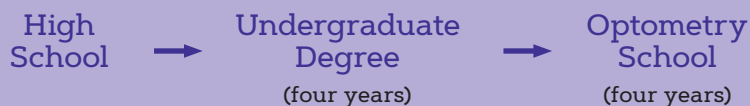
MINOR



Optometrists are independent primary health care professionals whose main role is to provide specialized vision care. They are referred to as doctors of optometry, but unlike ophthalmologists, they are not required to go to medical school. They conduct eye examinations in order to diagnose, treat and manage diseases, injuries and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associated structures. Optometrists are not licensed to perform eye surgery but they are responsible for diagnosing deficiencies in the eye and prescribing corrective lenses and/or vision aids and therapy when appropriate. They work in private practices, eyewear retail stores and numerous types of health care facilities.

Optometrists must have strong decision making skills to evaluate the results of diagnostic tests and decide on the best course of treatment. They should be at ease interacting with patients and be able to communicate effectively both in writing and orally. They need to be detail oriented to ensure medications and prescriptions are accurate and patient care data are appropriately monitored and recorded.

To practice optometry a student must graduate from an accredited school of optometry with the Doctor of Optometry degree. They must then pass the National Board of Examiners in Optometry exam. Additional training after optometry school is not required to practice but optometrists may opt for a one-year residency to get advanced clinical training in a specialty area.



No specific major is required. As long as you successfully complete the prerequisite courses you can compete for admission, regardless of your major. The profession will be stronger and more enriched by being made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds. Allow yourself to explore a wide range of different interests early in your college career. When you find something you enjoy, chances are you will do well in it. Let your curiosity be your guide.

Perks of the Profession

EXCELLENT INCOME

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median annual income of \$124,300 (2021 data).

GREAT JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of optometrists is projected to grow 10% from 2021-2031 which is faster than the average for all occupations. The aging population is increasing demand for optometrists.

SPECIALIZATION

Areas of specialization include family practice, low vision rehabilitation, pediatric or geriatric optometry and ocular disease among others.

Regional Optometry Schools

- Illinois College of Optometry
- Indiana University
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- New England College of Optometry
- NOVA Southeastern University
- Salus University
- Southern College of Optometry
- State University of New York College of Optometry
- The Ohio State University
- University of Pikeville



Students in the Pre-Optometry minor must take courses in:

- Biology (6)
- Chemistry (5)
- Physics (2)
- Statistics (1)
- Calculus (1)
- Psychology (1)
- Writing (1)
- Literature (1)

Contact Information

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OTHER LINKS

American Optometric Association
www.aoa.org

Optometry Students.com
www.optometrystudents.com

Association of Schools and Colleges
of Optometry
www.optometriceducation.org

Explore Health Careers
<https://explorehealthcareers.org/>

JMU Pre-Optometry Minor



JMU students who are interested in becoming an optometrist can choose to enroll in the pre-optometry minor. The minor includes courses required for admission to optometry schools.

Admission to optometry schools is very competitive. In addition to the prerequisite coursework, students will most likely need to

- Shadow (observe) an optometrist.
- Pursue clinically related activities including paid or volunteer work.
- Complete the Optometry Admission Test, a test assessing reading comprehension, quantitative reasoning as well as knowledge of science and physics.
- Participate in research opportunities and/or leadership experiences.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 grading scale). To be a competitive applicant, students generally need a much higher GPA.
- Demonstrate experience with diverse individuals – from children to elderly, including able-bodied as well as physically or cognitively challenged and those that are disadvantaged.
- Obtain letters of recommendation.

At JMU pre-professional health advisors are available to guide students not only in course selection and the application process but also in the other activities required for an optometry school applicant to be competitive.

For the 2019-2021 entry years 14 JMU students applied to optometry programs. Eleven matriculated to five different optometry programs.