

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | ADMISSIONS 2021

OPTOMETRY

#BEYONDIDEAS

UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



BEYOND VISION

97% of optometry graduates are employed within six months of graduation

EARN 2 DEGREES pursue a Waterloo science program and graduate with two degrees – Honours Science BSc and OD

BECOMING AN OPTOMETRIST

The eyes have it!

There are no substitutes for vision – it's a critical part of everyday life. That's why it's vital we have highly skilled and trained optometrists who not only help correct our vision issues, but also understand the connection between the health of your eyes and your overall well-being.

Optometry goes beyond correcting vision with glasses or contact lenses – it examines whole eye health that can extend into disease detection in the body, such as diabetes or hypertension. Having a career in optometry means you'll be on the front lines of health care, assisting patients with optical therapy and eye disease management, as well as vision therapy, vision rehabilitation, sports vision, pediatrics, and more.

The field of optometry is constantly expanding – especially with an aging population. We encourage you to explore this dynamic field and learn how you might join its ranks.

uwaterloo.ca/optometry

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TOWARDS BECOMING AN OPTOMETRIST

- › Take courses in the sciences and mathematics
- › Start reaching out to optometrists in your area to ask questions about this career path and how you might obtain direct work or volunteer experience in an optometry setting
- › Explore university science programs that will meet the admission requirements for the professional school you wish to attend (such as the programs we list on page five)

EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL CAREERS

Seeing eye to eye.

There are many career options available in eye care, beyond optometry. Here's a short list of eye care professions.

30% 

INCREASE IN THE PREVALENCE OF VISION LOSS IN CANADA over the next decade

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS, 2018

5,000 approximate number of optometrists practising in Canada

1,150 approximate number of ophthalmologists practising in Canada

OPTOMETRIST

A health care professional (Doctor of Optometry) who provides primary vision care ranging from sight testing and correction to the diagnosis, treatment, and management of eye disease (including complications from other conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension).

VISION RESEARCHER

Often an optometrist with an additional MSc or PhD who explores innovative improvements and technologies within the optometry and vision science fields.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

A physician who diagnoses and manages eye conditions and disease mostly through medications and surgery; typically after referral.

OPTOMETRIC ASSISTANTS OPHTHALMIC MEDICAL PERSONNEL

Individuals who assist optometrists or ophthalmologists in the delivery of eye care services.

OPTICIAN

Trained to design, verify, and fit eyeglass lenses and frames, contact lenses, and other devices to correct eyesight.



EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL TIMELINES

YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13	YR 14
▶ OPTOMETRIST													
Minimum 3 years undergraduate degree			4-year professional undergraduate degree				1-year residency (optional)						
▶ VISION RESEARCHER*													
Minimum 4 years undergraduate degree			1-2 years MSc		2-4 years PhD (optional)								
▶ OPTHALMOLOGIST													
Minimum 3 years undergraduate degree		4 years of medical school				5-year residency program			1-2 years fellowship (optional)				
▶ OPTHALMIC MEDICAL PERSONNEL**													
Various education timelines (often college or university with additional certification)													
▶ OPTICIAN													
2-year college program													

The University of Waterloo offers the only English-language Doctor of Optometry program in Canada.

*VISION RESEARCHERS can also be, and often times are, optometrists and ophthalmologists who choose to specialize in a research area full time, or assist/lead research while still practising. Some optometrists will also seek their MSc or PhD after graduating from the Doctor of Optometry program.

**OPHTHALMIC MEDICAL PERSONNEL are often optometry assistants, ophthalmic assistants, ophthalmic technicians, or ophthalmic nurses. Each of these professions requires education and training that can be on various timelines. We recommend you research them to determine the best route for you.

OPTOMETRY ASSOCIATIONS

opto.ca optom.on.ca

EARNING YOUR DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY (OD) DEGREE

Our OD program prepares you to become a registered optometrist. Candidates must complete a specific set of university courses to qualify for admission into the program. It first requires a minimum of three years in a university Bachelor of Science (BSc) program with a full course load (five courses per term) for six terms.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

START UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE DEGREE

> Apply to a science program at the University of Waterloo or another institution. See chart on the next page for recommended Waterloo programs. Optometry applicants from all universities are given equal consideration. To ensure the courses you take meet our requirements, check out uwaterloo.ca/optometry.

COMPLETE ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum university average of 75% required.

REQUIRED COURSES (one term is equal to four months)

- > English (writing) (one term)
- > Introductory ethics (one term)
- > Introductory psychology (one term)
- > Introductory biology (two terms, including lab components)
- > Microbiology (one term)
- > Physiology (human/mammalian) (two terms)
- > Introductory chemistry (one term, including lab component)
- > Biochemistry (one term)
- > Organic chemistry (one term)
- > Physics (two terms, including lab components)
- > Calculus (one term)
- > Statistics (one term)

COMPLETE NON-ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- > Optometry Admissions Test (OAT), minimum score of 300 for all sections
- > Computer-Based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics (CASPer)
- > Direct work or volunteer experience in an optometric setting
- > One letter of reference from an optometrist and one character reference letter

START DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY DEGREE

> Apply to the School of Optometry and Vision Science OD program

uwaterloo.ca/optometry/apply

THE WATERLOO ADVANTAGE

CLINICAL TRAINING

Gain hands-on training and exposure to different patient populations, enabling you to apply your classroom and lab learning to the many aspects of optometric practice.

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

Access unique facilities and the latest technologies in our ocular disease, acute care, contact lens, low vision, binocular vision, pediatric and special needs, and sports vision clinics.

EVIDENCE-BASED TEACHING

Learn biomedical, visual, and clinical sciences from faculty who bring current and new knowledge into our classrooms and clinics. Graduate knowing you've been trained to provide patient care based on evidence and best practice.

TOP TALENT

Canada's innovation university attracts award-winning teachers and researchers, along with some of the best and brightest students from across the country.

RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO SCIENCE PROGRAMS

uwaterloo.ca/future-students/science

There are many science programs offered by the University of Waterloo and every program will provide you with the high-quality education you can expect from a world-class university.

Three specific programs will give you the flexibility you need to apply to the OD program after three years. We encourage you to research the programs that interest you the most. If you wish to apply to a program that is not noted below, connect with us to find out if it'll meet your goals.

HONOURS SCIENCE

Our most flexible science program, Honours Science allows you the freedom of discovery by choosing which science courses are of greatest interest (with a few ground rules, naturally). This program is the easiest way to ensure you meet all of the academic requirements for the professional school of your choice while earning your Honours Bachelor of Science degree.

Available in the regular stream of study only.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOLOGY

The study of life is an obvious choice for those interested in optometry and other health care professions. Biology, as a major within the Life Sciences entry program, has sufficient flexibility (think electives) to ensure you can meet the academic requirements of our OD program, or any other health profession schools you wish to apply to.

Available in both the co-op and regular stream of study. Note, if you choose co-op, it will take you four years to meet the academic requirements for the OD program, instead of three.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

The Biomedical Sciences major, within the Life Sciences entry program, focuses on human and other animal systems with respect to their functions as they relate to health, disease, and the healing process. With plenty of flexibility built into the program, it's a good choice for reaching your health profession goals.

Available in the regular stream of study only.

REQUIRED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES FOR ENTRY INTO FACULTY OF SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- > Advanced Functions (min. 70%)
- > Calculus and Vectors (min. 70%)
- > Grade 12U English (ENG4U) (min. 70%)
- > Any two of: Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Space Science, Mathematics of Data Management, Physics
- > One additional U or M course



LOW 80s

Admission average to Honours Science, Biology, Biomedical Sciences

(based on previous years' entering classes, thus are subject to change)

90 NUMBER OF STUDENTS ADMITTED INTO THE OD PROGRAM EACH YEAR



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

We acknowledge that the University of Waterloo is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee people. The University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

UNIVERSITY OF
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