DISCOVER YOUR STORY IN OPTOMETRY
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 our eyes and our 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-disorder 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 discipline and learn how you might join its ranks.

Let’s explore your story in Optometry at Waterloo.
**STEPS TOWARDS BECOMING AN OPTOMETRIST**

› Take courses in mathematics and science.
› 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’ll meet the admission requirements for the professional school you wish to attend (recommended Waterloo programs are listed on page 5).

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**MORE TO EXPLORE**

Meet us online for more tips and stories:

- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/waterloosci/)
- [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWiG8QYXu0m9Ls5t29V0T1Q)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/waterloosci/)
CAREERS IN OPTOMETRY

There are many career options available in eye care. Optometry is one of many professional fields that help keep our vision healthy.

Other career options include:

› Vision researcher; often an optometrist with an additional MSc or PhD degree who explores innovative improvements and technologies within the fields of optometry and vision science.

› Ophthalmologist; a physician who diagnoses and manages eye conditions and disease mostly through medications and surgery.

› Optician; trained to design, verify, and fit eyeglass lenses and frames, contact lenses, and other corrective eye devices.

EYE-CARE PROFESSIONS

Learn to see eye to eye. Becoming an optometrist has a variety of benefits and advantages. Not only are you a notable and important health-care professional, but you get to enjoy a career that’s personable, stimulating, and rewarding.

Optometrists have a stable work environment – often with good work/life balance and time for community involvement. Due to the nature of an eye exam, which is thorough and involved, optometrists can spend a long period of time with their patients and develop strong relationships with them. This builds trust between the optometrist and patient, which can help when difficult treatment decisions need to be made.

Optometrists become leaders in their communities and are well-respected professionals.

30% INCREASE
in the prevalence of vision loss in Canada over the next decade (Canadian Association of Optometrists, 2018)

OPTOMETRY ASSOCIATIONS
opto.ca | optom.on.ca
TEACHING AND RESEARCH INNOVATION

Our new virtual reality training lab helps Canada’s next generation of optometrists learn how to diagnose vision problems and eye diseases more quickly and accurately.

The FYidoctors Simulation Lab is the first of its kind in Canada and accelerates the development of essential clinical skills for optometrists. The authentic experience simulates a patient’s eye and provides students with an opportunity to use virtual reality to practice on many cases that range from wellness to diseases, such as macular degeneration and diabetes.

MORE TO SEE

Optometry isn’t just about looking at vision. It’s about holistic eye and body health. This means delving into areas that focus on everything from ocular biology to education. Here are the four main branches of research that the University of Waterloo focuses on:

› Health care, education, and delivery
› Neurosciences
› Ocular biology and pathophysiology
› Technology and optics

EXPLORING OPTOMETRY RESEARCH

Many optometrists choose to research within the field, exploring new technologies, equipment, and medications to improve the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of ocular diseases. Our School of Optometry and Vision Science doesn’t just train optometrists. It also specializes in groundbreaking discoveries.
EARNING YOUR DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY DEGREE
Our Doctor of Optometry (OD) program prepares you to become a registered optometrist. Candidates must complete a specific set of university courses and requirements to qualify for admission into the program.

UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE DEGREE
You must complete 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 University of Waterloo offers many programs that help you meet the course requirements in three years (see opposite page for recommended programs). BSc programs from other institutions are also given equal consideration. To ensure the BSc program and/or the courses you take meet the requirements, visit:

uwaterloo.ca/optometry

90 students admitted to the OD program each year (out of an average 300 applications)

ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
Minimum university average of 75% required.
› 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)

NON-ACADEMIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
› Optometry Admissions Test (OAT), minimum score of 300 for all sections
› Computer-Based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics (CASPer and Snapshot)
› Direct work or volunteer experience in an optometry setting
› One letter of reference from an optometrist
› One character reference letter

uwaterloo.ca/optometry/apply

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

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 to 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 instructors and researchers, along with some of the best and brightest students from across the country.
RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO SCIENCE PROGRAMS

There are 17 majors in the Faculty of Science that lead to a Bachelor of Science (BSc). However, of these, only three will give you the flexibility you need to apply to the Doctor of Optometry program within three years (listed below). Other majors, like Physics or Biochemistry, may be of interest to you and offer a high-quality education but will take you more time and possible degree modifications to achieve the academic requirements for Optometry admission.

HONOURS SCIENCE
Our most flexible science program, Honours Science allows you the most freedom when choosing your science courses (with a few ground rules, of course) and offers a healthy dose of electives to achieve your English and ethics requirements.
› Available in the regular program of study only

BIOLOGY (LIFE SCIENCES)
Studying life and life systems is an obvious choice for those interested in optometry and other health-care professions, so naturally Biology is a popular choice. It also offers sufficient electives to ensure you can meet the academic requirements for our OD program.
› Available in the co-op and regular programs of study. If you choose co-op, it will take at least four years to meet the academic requirements for the OD program, given that you will alternate between academic and work terms.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES (LIFE SCIENCES)
Focus on human and other animal systems and their functions relating to health, disease, and the healing process. This major is specifically designed to meet all of the science requirements for common professional school programs, including the OD program.
› Available in the regular program of study only

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR FACULTY OF SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
› Advanced Functions (min. 70%)
› Calculus and Vectors (min. 70%)
› 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, and Biomedical Sciences
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

The University of Waterloo acknowledges it is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land granted to the Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River in the Haldimand Treaty of 1784. The Haldimand Tract and surrounding area, including our Stratford campus, is the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee.