Optometry School

Optometrist – O.D.

Information below is for pre-health advisement only. Students are responsible for verifying admissions information for their programs of interest. All information is subject to change.

**Career Description:**
Optometrists examine the eyes and other parts of the visual system. They also diagnose and treat visual problems and manage diseases, injuries, and other disorders of the eyes. They prescribe eyeglasses or contact lenses as needed, as well as promote eye health and counsel patients on how general health can affect eyesight. Most optometrists work in stand-alone offices of optometry, but others may also work in doctors’ offices and optical goods stores. Optometrists should not be confused with ophthalmologists, who perform eye surgeries, or dispensing opticians, who fit and adjust eye glasses and provide contact lenses, based on an optometrist’s written prescription*.

**Basic Education Path to Career:**

4 year undergraduate degree → 4 year doctorate degree → 0-1 year residency program *

* Residency is not required to practice as general optometrist but required for specialists.

**Matriculant Statistics:**
- **Average overall GPA of matriculants in 2015:** 3.43 overall
- **Exam Required:** OAT (Optometry Admission Test)
- **Average Exam Score of matriculants for 2015:** Scores > 330 are competitive
- **To be competitive for this career, schools want to see at least 2 years of pre-health semesters, which include multiple 3000/4000 level science courses before applying.**
  - Pre-health semesters are: Semesters consisting of minimum 14-16 credit hours, with 8-11 hours of science courses. Science courses consist of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.

**Required extra-curricular activities:**
1) Extensive optometry/clinical shadowing
2) Volunteering and/or employment in clinical/healthcare settings
3) Academic Enrichment Programs: Research experience, scholars programs, participation in optometry associations and organizations, etc.
4) Awards, honors, scholarships

**Recommended extra-curricular activities:**
1) Leadership experience
2) Teaching/tutoring experience
3) Related employment
4) Global involvement through international service or study abroad
5) Unique experiences or attributes

**Resources:**
- Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry: [http://www.opted.org/](http://www.opted.org/)
- For more information please contact the USF Division of Health Professions Advising at healthprofadvise@usf.edu