General Description:
Some people will tell you that doctors of optometry diagnose and treat disorders of the eye. What optometrists really do – each and every day – is make a real difference in real lives. Optometrists reveal new vistas, return lost joys, empower greater achievement, and preserve unlived lives. That’s what optometrists do.

What are some common daily activities/experiences?
Optometrists provide full-scope primary optometric care. Their day can be quite varied and challenging. Patient interaction can include performing routine visual exams, removing a foreign body from the cornea, evaluating a child who is not performing well in school, fitting a contact lens patient, prescribing medication for glaucoma, providing follow-up care after refractive surgery, and/or fitting a patient who is legally blind with a magnifying device that enables the patient to read.

What are 3-5 personal characteristics important for happiness and success in your profession?
- Must enjoy people and be energized by interacting with them: this is a number one priority!
- Must enjoy working with others in a collaboratively way to solve problems: this happens with patients and with office staff.
- Must like repetition: being an optometrist is more like a teacher who teaches the same class over and over where the only thing that changes is the student.
- Must be accepting of the “human animal”: patient care involves handling a human being.

What are 3-5 key questions students should be asking themselves as they prepare for your profession?
- Am I energized by interaction with people or is it taxing?
- Can I work collaboratively to solve problems in a solution-oriented way?
- Can I deal with repetition and explaining the same things over and over?
- Can I deal with up close and personal with a human being?

Preparing for Admission:
- **Academic:** The requirements for admission to the schools and colleges of optometry vary, but students wishing to study optometry should be certain to take at least a year of biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, general physics, and microbiology; English; college mathematics; and other social science and humanities courses. The science courses should be pre-professional level courses designed for science majors or health professional students and should offer laboratory experience. Brief survey courses in the sciences will not prepare students for optometry school. Students should be sure to consult with the health professions advisor at their school or an advisor at the school or college of optometry that they plan to attend.
  - Access a list of prerequisites here: [http://www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)
- **Standardized test(s):** All schools and colleges of optometry require the Optometry Admission Test (OAT). For further information, please go to the [OAT website](http://www.opted.org).
- **Experience/Exposure:** Most schools consider an applicant’s exposure to optometry to be of vital importance. Each applicant should become acquainted with at least one optometrist and if possible gain some firsthand experience to see what optometrists do on a daily basis.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Suggested sources strongly encouraged for LORs include:
  - An optometrist who can state through documented experience that the applicant knows what the profession of optometry entails.
- A professor with whom the applicant has done personal work (such as assisted on a specific project or served as a TA or reader), or with whom the applicant took a course.
- An employer or extracurricular activity advisor who can comment about the applicant’s maturity, diligence, and conscientiousness.

**Resources for researching schools:**

### The Admissions Cycle:
- Application opens / application can be submitted: Late June / early July 2016
- Deadlines: Submission deadlines are between December and first of June depending on the program; deadlines are available at on the OptomCAS website.
- Application closes: early June 2017
- Number of schools participating: All 23 schools and colleges of optometry participate in OptomCAS.
- Fees, fee waivers: For 2016-2017, the application fee is $170 for one institution and $70 for each additional institution. OptomCAS does not offer fee waivers.
- Letters of rec logistics: Applicants may designate up to four letters of recommendation. OptomCAS will only accept electronic LORs. The LOR requirements for each school and college are available on the OptomCAS website.
- Standardized test logistics: Official OAT scores must be sent to optometry schools when the exam is taken. Applicants are asked to self-report OAT scores on the OptomCAS application.
- Transcripts: Official transcripts should be sent directly to OptomCAS by the program deadline.
- Instruction manual and FAQ: Included at the bottom of the OptomCAS application.
- Criminal Background Checks: Criminal backgrounds will continue as an option for schools and colleges of optometry.
- Contact information for students: 617-612-2888/optomcasinfo@optomcas.org
- CAS contact for advisors: Kate Owen, Senior Customer Solutions Manager, 617-612-2086, kowen@liaisonedu.com
- Social Media for the CAS: N/A

### The Admissions Process:
- Approx dates of interviews, offers: Varies from institution to institution.
- Advisor portal: OptomCAS provides a portal for advisors to access school-specific information about their applying advisees.
  - [Click here](http://www.optomcas.org/) to create an OptomCAS account.
  - [Click here](http://www.optomcas.org/) to log in to an existing OptomCAS account.
- Total number of applicants in 2016 admissions cycle (through CAS and/or all member programs if known): 2,812
- Average # of applications per student: 4.84
- Total number of first year students (through CAS and all if known): 1,818 in 2015-16
- More information on previous application cycles can be found on the OptomCAS website under Applicant Data Reports.
- Total number of students: The total enrollment in 2015-16 for the schools and colleges of optometry was 6,900.

### Learn More about the Profession

#### Training & Career Opportunities
- Number of years: Four
- Degree attained: Doctor of Optometry (OD)
NAAHP Fact Sheet for Health Professions Advisors
Optometry

- Total number of graduates in most recent academic year: 1,557 graduates in 2016
- Data on employment of recent graduates, if available: N/A

Key Resources for Students
- Applicants Resource Page
- Be a Doctor of Optometry: Put Your Future in Focus Video
- The “True Stories” Booklet
- Optometry: A Career Guide

Key Resources for Advisors
- Advisor Portal URL(s): To create an account: [https://uap.webadmit.org/advisor/requests/new](https://uap.webadmit.org/advisor/requests/new) or to log in to an existing account: [https://uap.webadmit.org/session/new](https://uap.webadmit.org/session/new)
- Advisor Resource Page
- Data/Stats/Info Warehouse: On the OptomCAS website under Applicant Data Reports.

Social Media
- ASCO YouTube Channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmws13yqQhOpSiR2qKjxizQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmws13yqQhOpSiR2qKjxizQ)
- ASCO Twitter Page: [https://twitter.com/OptometricED](https://twitter.com/OptometricED)
- ASCO LinkedIn Page: [https://www.linkedin.com/company/3113027](https://www.linkedin.com/company/3113027)
- ASCO Instagram: [http://www.instagram.com/optometriced](http://www.instagram.com/optometriced)

Advisory Council Professional Association Partner Information
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)
- **Mission**
  Founded in 1941, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) is a non-profit education association representing the interests of optometric education. ASCO’s membership encompasses the twenty-three schools and colleges of optometry in the United States and Puerto Rico. A number of foreign optometry schools are affiliate members.

  ASCO is committed to achieving excellence in optometric education and to helping its member schools prepare well-qualified graduates for entrance into the profession of optometry.

  The mission of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry is to serve the public through the continued advancement and promotion of all aspects of academic optometry.

- **Size of organization, Number of member institutions:** 23 schools

- **New institutional members in last two years:** University of Pikeville – Kentucky College of Optometry and Chicago College of Optometry at Midwestern University

Advisory Council Contact Information
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For more information on many health professions, we recommend the NAAHP publication, [Health Professions Admission Guide: Strategies for Success](http://example.com), available on the NAAHP website.