

OPTOMETRY SCHOOL GENERAL TIMELINE



This is a general timeline for traditional pre-optometry students who plan to matriculate into optometry school after graduating from a four-year university. It is to be used for general guidance and should not be used as an ultimate guide. Students are encouraged to meet with their academic counselors to map out a strategic academic blueprint.

YEAR 1

- Talk to your academic counselor and/or pre-health advisor to strategically plan out your college career.
- Look into volunteer, work and/or intern opportunities in the field of optometry. Optometry schools recommend or require applicants to have been exposed to the field of optometry.
- Become a part your school's pre-optometry club and/or any other campus organizations. Try joining a club that will help hone your interpersonal and leadership skills.
- Make sure to research into optometry schools to learn about their specific requirements.
- It will be important to develop relationships with your professors because you will need them to write you letters of recommendations.
- Make sure you are keeping up with pre-optometry and school-related courses.

SUMMER AFTER YEAR 1

- Take summer courses if needed and/or for enrichment. Talk to your pre-health advisor to determine the best way to take advantage of your summer. As a pre-optometry student, you should use your summers productively to build up your resume.
- Try getting experience working with patients in an optometry setting.

YEAR 2

- Continue talking with your academic counselor and/or pre-health advisor to make sure you are on track to get into optometry school.
- If you have not done so already, obtain a volunteer, research, intern, or work position in an optometry setting. Talk to your counselors and/or advisors to see what the best opportunities available are for you.
- Continue to develop relationships with your college's faculty. Remember that you will need letters of recommendation from people who can comment on your academic abilities.
- Continue to partake in campus organizations such as the pre-optometry club.
- Make sure you are keeping up and doing well with your pre-optometry and school-specific courses. Remember your GPA is one of the most important, if not most important, factor in your optometry school admissions.
- Look into the Optometry Admission Test (OAT). This is required of all optometry schools.
- Consider when you want to enroll in optometry school. If you want to enroll soon after you graduate college, you need to start applying after your third year/beginning of fourth year. If you want to take a year off (called a gap year), you can apply after your senior year.

SUMMER AFTER YEAR 2

- By now you should have had some exposure in an optometry setting. Continue working, interning, or volunteering at your current position. If there are promotions at your current position or if you find even more meaningful positions, apply to those. You want to make your optometry school resume as strong as possible. Talk to your counselors and advisors regarding any questions.
- Consider taking summer courses if needed and/or for enrichment. Make sure to take advantage of every summer.
- If you want to apply for optometry school the summer after your third year/beginning of fourth year, consider taking the OAT this summer. If not, decide when you want to take it.

YEAR 3

- Continue talking with your academic counselor and/or pre-health advisor to make sure you are on track to get into optometry school. You should have determined by now whether you want to apply after your third year/beginning of fourth year or after your fourth year of college.
- Continue to gain experience working in an optometry setting.
- If possible, try to obtain leadership positions. Consider running for a leadership position of a campus organization or being part of your school's student body association.
- Think about which professors and/or professionals you want to ask for letters of recommendation. It is crucial that you consider this way before they are due. If you want to apply to optometry school after third year/beginning fourth year, it is best to ask professors for recommendations during your third year.
- Make a list of all the optometry schools you are considering and make sure you have a good grasp on the specific requirements of all the schools.
- If you want to apply the summer after your third year/beginning of fourth year, you should take the OAT sometime during this year if you have not done so already.
- Make sure to register and adequately prepare for the OAT. Consider taking an OAT preparation course.
- Make sure you are keeping up and doing well with your pre-optometry and school-specific courses.

SUMMER AFTER YEAR 3

- Continue working in an optometry setting.
- If planning to enroll in optometry school after your senior year, make sure to start to apply/prepare for optometry school during this time. Some schools start accepting applications in August while others do not accept them until October.
- If you have not done so, consider taking the OAT this summer.
- Make sure you are keeping up with your pre-optometry and school-specific courses.

YEAR 4

- Continue meeting with your counselor or advisor to make sure you are doing everything you need to get into optometry school.
- If you applied for optometry school already, start preparing for potential interviews.
- If you received acceptances, research the different schools to see which one fits you best.
- If you are applying for optometry school after the spring of your senior year, make sure that you take the OAT and start preparing your application materials. Make sure to ask for your letters or recommendations as early as possible. If there are any questions, consult your counselor or advisor.
- Continue your involvement in meaningful extracurricular activities.
- Make sure you are keeping up and doing well in your pre-optometry and school-specific courses. Complete all your requirements and declare for graduation.

SUMMER AFTER GRADUATION

- If you are enrolling in optometry school in the fall, prepare for optometry school by purchasing books, making living arrangements, talking with current students, etc.
- If applying during this time, make sure to collect all your application materials and apply. You want to apply as early as possible.
- Continue your involvement in meaningful extracurricular activities if possible.
- Talk to your counselor and/or advisor to make sure you have done everything you possible could do to succeed.