Optometry School Admission

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The following courses meet requirements for most optometry schools, though individual school requirements may vary. Complete all required courses before taking the OAT and applying for admission. Take all required courses during the fall and/or spring semesters at URI (not summer or on-line).

CHEMISTRY

General Chemistry, two semesters with lab:

- CHM 101 & 102 Lab (3+1 credits)
- CHM 112 & 114 Lab (3+1 credits)

Organic Chemistry, at least one semester:

- CHM 124 & 126 Lab (3+1 credits) or CHM 227 (3 credits)

CHM191/192/291 will satisfy this requirement for chemistry majors

STATISTICS & MATH

One semester of statistics and one semester of math are required:

- STA 307, 308, 409, or 411

  And

- MTH 131 or 141

PHYSICS

Two semesters with lab:

- PHY 111 & 185 lab (3+1 credits)
- PHY 112 & 186 lab (3+1 credits)

The three course sequence, PHYS 203-204-205 with labs may be substituted.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

6 credits—one from each group below is recommended (some courses will have prerequisites). Additional humanities coursework may be required.

- PSY 113

  AND

- PSY 232, 254, 255, SOC 100, or 224

ENGLISH

Two semesters (6-8 credits).

Most English (ENG), Writing (WRT), and Literature Courses fulfill this requirement, with the exception of creative writing.

BIOLOGY

Two semesters are required:

- BIO 101/110 & 103 Lab (3+1 credits)
- BIO 102 & 104 Lab (3+1 credits)

Additional upper-level biology coursework is required by some schools.

BIOCHEMISTRY & MICROBIOLOGY

- CMB 311 Introductory Biochemistry (3 credits)
  Pre-req: CHM124 or equivalent

- CMB 211 Microbiology (4 credits). For CELS and nutrition majors only OR CMB 201 Medical Microbiology (4 credits). All other majors
  Pre-reqs for both: one semester of biology & one year of chemistry

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

- BIO 220 & 221 Lab (3+1 credits)
- BIO 222 & 223 Lab (3+1 credits)

(BIO121 + BIO242 & 244 Lab also satisfy this requirement)

Other Academic Considerations

AP Credits. Students with AP credit equivalent to required courses should take upper-level courses in the same subject. Consult with a pre-health advisor before taking upper-level courses.

Grades. Successful applicants generally achieve a grade point average of 3.3 or higher.

Major. "Pre-Health/Pre-Optometry" is not a major at URI. Optometry schools do not require or prefer any particular major. Students from almost any major can pursue the pre-optometry curriculum in conjunction with their major and general education requirements.

EXPERIENTIAL EXPECTATIONS

In addition to completing academic requirements, successful applicants to optometry school participate in a variety of activities related to the competencies students are expected to have gained through their college studies and experiences. The Functional Guidelines for optometry students is a good guide to experiential expectations, along with individual optometry schools' curricular objectives, which are available on school websites. You can find the Functional Guidelines at:

https://optometriceducation.org/students-future-students/resources/functional-guidelines/

The following chart gives examples of different types of activities that can help you develop one or more of the attributes optometry school admission committees are looking for. Note that many of the activities noted below meet multiple criteria. *The chart is intended as a guide, not a checklist:*

CLINICAL

Successful optometry school applicants gain significant clinical experience before applying. You should become acquainted with at least one optometrist and obtain first-hand experience to see what optometrists do on a daily basis and understand how optometry practices work. We recommend that you begin clinical experiences as early in your academic career as possible.

SERVICE

Because optometry is fundamentally a service profession, optometry schools look for applicants who have demonstrated a commitment to serving people. Common activities include (but are not limited to):

- Community service projects, clubs, and organizations.
- Volunteer teaching or tutoring on campus or in the community.
- Assisting individuals with disabilities.
- Volunteering or working for a nonprofit organization domestically or abroad.

LEADERSHIP

Optometry schools are especially interested in candidates who have demonstrated leadership in a variety of ways, and who have the interpersonal skills to work effectively with diverse patients. Common activities include (but are not limited to):

- Serving as an officer in a student club or organization.
- Initiating significant group projects within a class or organization.
- Serving as captain of a varsity or club sports team.
- Promotion to a leadership position on a paid job.
- Working as a course or laboratory teaching assistant.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

As the population of the United States becomes increasingly diverse, optometrists must be able to interact with patients with varied cultural norms as well as a broad range of experiences. Common activities include (but are not limited to):

- Courses or research that focus on minority groups, cross-cultural issues, or social equity/inequality.
- Learning a language other than English.
- Studying, working, or volunteering abroad.
- Participation in intercultural clubs or organizations.
- Courses or research on cross-cultural issues in health care or health care inequality.

TEAMWORK

Optometry schools emphasize the ability to work collaboratively health care professionals to provide the best care for patients. Common activities related to teamwork include (but are not limited to)

- Group projects within classes.
- Working as part of research team in a lab or other research setting.
- Serving as a member of a student peer leadership group, e.g. resident advisors.
- Playing on a sports team.

RESEARCH

Optometry is based on science and constant assimilation of new knowledge applicable in clinical practice. Research activities often integrate knowledge you have learned in your various classes while giving you the opportunity to work closely with a faculty researcher. Common research activities include (but are not limited to):

- Laboratory "bench" research.
- Clinical research.
- Quantitative or qualitative public health research.
- Scholarship in disciplines not related to medicine or science.
- A thesis project.