

**THE DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY**

Doctors of Optometry (optometrists) are the independent primary health care professionals for the eye. Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases, injuries, and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as identify related systemic conditions affecting the eye.

- Doctors of Optometry prescribe medications, low vision rehabilitation, vision therapy, spectacle lenses, and contact lenses, and perform certain surgical procedures.
- Optometrists counsel their patients regarding surgical and non-surgical options that meet their visual needs related to their occupations, avocations, and lifestyle.
- An optometrist has completed pre-professional undergraduate education in a college or university and four years of professional education at a college of optometry, leading to the doctor of optometry (O.D.) degree. Some optometrists complete an optional residency in a specific area of practice.
- Optometrists are eye health care professionals state-licensed to diagnose and treat diseases and disorders of the eye and visual system.

Men and women who choose optometry enjoy challenging and rewarding careers. Since optometric laws now emphasize more systemic health care, the scope of practice is much more than fitting glasses or contact lenses. It is a special moment for the doctor when a child is able to see clearly for the first time, or when a partially sighted patient's full acuity is regained through the use of vision therapy or therapeutic agents.

The Doctor of Optometry also enjoys the benefits of financial security, independence, and status in the community. According to the 2014 American Optometric Association Economic Survey, the average net income for all optometrists is \$129,692, while the average net income for owner optometrists is \$154,521.

The information and requirements included in this document pertain only to the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis. Students interested in other programs of optometry can learn more at [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org).

**RECOMMENDED PRE-OPTOMETRY PROGRAM**

A candidate for admission to the Southern College of Optometry (SCO) is required to present at least three years (90 semester hours) of college work, with science courses containing the appropriate laboratory work. The candidate must be eligible to continue at the last school attended, and preference will be given to applicants with baccalaureate or higher degrees. Please note that in the 2016 entering class, all but one of the accepted applicants had a bachelor's degree.

The following curriculum is a suggested sequence of courses which includes all the courses required for admission to the Southern College of Optometry. Students who are pursuing a BA/BS degree from the

College of Arts and Sciences should consult the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Guide and Advising Handbook for specific degree requirements and lists of approved courses. All students pursuing a degree from UT must complete UT's general education requirements.

<b>FRESHMAN</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
English 101-102 or equivalent .....	6
Biology 150 (see Note 1) .....	3
Biology 160, 159 .....	3, 2
Chemistry 120-130 .....	8
Math (see Note 2) .....	8
Social Sciences (see Note 3) .....	3
Psychology 110 .....	3
	<b>36</b>

<b>SOPHOMORE</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
Physics 221-222 .....	8
Math 115 or Statistics 201 .....	3
Communicating Orally .....	3
Social Sciences (see Note 3) .....	3
Foreign Language (Intermediate Level Sequence - see Note 4) .....	6
Arts and Humanities.....	3
Chemistry 260, 360-369 (see Note 5).....	8
	<b>34</b>

<b>JUNIOR</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
Arts and Humanities.....	3
Communicating through Writing.....	3
BCMB 401 or 412 (see Note 5) .....	4
Microbiology 210 or Biology 220-229 (see Note 6).....	3-5
Non US History.....	6
Global Challenges (if Biology 150 not taken) .....	0-3
Connections .....	9
	<b>28/33</b>

**TOTAL: 90 hours minimum**

<b>SENIOR</b>	<b>CREDIT HOURS</b>
Completion of major program and BA/BS requirements	<b>TOTAL: 120 hours minimum</b>

Note 1: Pre-optometry students who are not majoring in a biological science may substitute Biology 101 and 102 for Biology 150.

Note 2: The Admissions Committee at SCO requires one college-level calculus course: Math 125, 141, or 152. Math placement depends on high school course work, ACT/SAT math subscores, and BA/BS requirements. Students should consult the undergraduate catalog for a complete list of courses that satisfy the University's quantitative reasoning requirement. Some UT majors and optometry schools require two semesters of calculus.

Note 3: Social Sciences include Anthropology 130, Geography 101, 111, 121, Sociology 110, 120, Political Science 101, 102, and Economics 201. SCO requires two social science courses beyond Psychology 110.

Note 4: This requirement assumes a student has had enough language background in high school to begin an intermediate language sequence at UTK.

Note 5: The Southern College of Optometry requires one semester of organic chemistry with lab and one semester of biochemistry. Students who are not pursuing majors requiring a year of organic chemistry may take Chemistry 260 and 269. BCMB 401 has a pre-requisite of Chemistry 260 and a co-requisite of 360 or instructor permission. BCMB 412 has a prerequisite of Biology 240 or instructor permission. Chemistry majors may substitute Chemistry 269 plus 449 for Chemistry 369.

Note 6: The SCO Admissions Committee prefers Biology 220-229. Biology 220 has a pre-requisite of Biology 150, 160, and 159. Microbiology 210 does not count in the Biology major.

### PROGRAM PLANNING

The importance of program planning for the pre-optometry student cannot be overstressed. These students should develop their programs carefully in order to prepare for rigorous advanced training in anatomy, physiology, psychology, and optical physics.

Furthermore, because admission into optometry schools is competitive, students are strongly encouraged to choose electives which will enable them to complete BA/BS requirements or to adapt to alternative programs in the event admission into an optometry school is not achieved.

Pre-health advisors are available in Arts and Sciences Advising Services, 313 Ayres Hall, to assist any student with his/her program; however, in the final analysis, it is the student's responsibility to determine the program which will best satisfy his or her particular needs.

### SEMINAR FOR PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS

During each fall semester, Arts and Sciences Advising Services offers a one credit hour seminar course entitled "Introduction to Health Care Delivery," which normally meets on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. in the Wood Auditorium of UT Medical Center. The course provides weekly seminars on topics such as managed care, family practice, ethical issues in medicine, malpractice, allied health programs, and more. It can be found in the timetable under Interdisciplinary Programs (INPG) 100 and is open to any interested student.

### LETTERS OF EVALUATION

Two letters of evaluation are required for admission to SCO, including one from a pre-health advisor or natural science professor and one from a Doctor of Optometry with whom the candidate has worked or shadowed but who is not related to the candidate. These letters should be submitted directly to OptomCAS. An applicant may supply additional letters of recommendation, but only two are required.

### OPTOMETRY ADMISSION TEST (OAT)

The OAT is an exclusively multiple choice science based test covering sections on Biology, Physics, Organic Chemistry, General Chemistry, Reading Comprehension and Quantitative Reasoning. Applicants should complete at least one year of college-level courses in these subjects before taking the OAT.

The OAT is available year round in a computerized format. The test is designed to measure general ability and comprehension of scientific information. Students applying for the 2018 class should sit for the OAT no later than the March 1 application deadline, although it is strongly recommended that the applicant take the test early in the cycle. OAT scores must be sent to OptomCAS directly from the OAT testing program. Scores over two years old are not acceptable.

For additional information on the OAT as well as online registration, go to [www.ada.org/en/oat/](http://www.ada.org/en/oat/).

Optometry Admission Testing Program  
211 East Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60611-2637  
(800) 232-2159  
[optexam@ada.org](mailto:optexam@ada.org)

### ADMISSIONS OVERVIEW - SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

New classes enter in August of each year, and new students may enroll only at that time. Applications for admission are accepted for evaluation from July 15 to March 1. Each application is reviewed upon receipt of all supporting documents, and the most promising applicants are invited to the College for a personal interview. Applicants are selected for interview on the basis of competitive undergraduate academic performance, competitive scores on the Optometry Admission Test, and letters of recommendation. It is always beneficial for an applicant to detail his/her optometric experience and exposure at the time of application.

All twenty-one optometry schools, including Southern College of Optometry, participate in the centralized application service for colleges of optometry (OptomCAS). Applicants apply and send supporting documents (academic transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.) through OptomCAS at [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org) or [www.optomcas.org](http://www.optomcas.org). Admission is offered on a rolling admissions basis; therefore, it is advantageous to apply early.

A fee of \$165.00 is assessed for the first school or college of optometry to which the student applies. An additional \$65.00 fee is charged for each additional school or college to which the student applies.

At the time of application, each applicant is required to have the registrar of every college attended send a transcript directly to OptomCAS. Requests for UTK transcripts are made in person at One-Stop located on the ground floor of Hodges Library or online at [onestop.utk.edu](http://onestop.utk.edu). A new transcript should be sent for each succeeding term prior to admission. Southern College of Optometry will require a final transcript in the spring/summer of the year the applicant is applying to demonstrate pre-requisite and/or degree completion.

Additional questions concerning the Southern College of Optometry should be directed to:

Southern College of Optometry  
1245 Madison Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104  
(901) 722-3200 · (800) 238-0180  
[www.sco.edu](http://www.sco.edu)

### STATISTICS

#### SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY *Entering Class of 2016*

Number of Applicants..... 877  
Number Enrolled ..... 136  
Percent with Bachelor's degree..... 99.3%

Age range..... 21-32  
Number of Males..... 51  
Number of Females..... 85  
Mean GPA (overall)..... 3.50  
Mean pre-requisite GPA ..... 3.48

Average OAT.....  
Academic..... 328  
Quantitative Reasoning..... 331  
Reading Comprehension..... 348  
Physics ..... 302  
Biology ..... 330  
General Chemistry ..... 336  
Organic Chemistry ..... 318  
Total Science..... 323

### REGIONAL AND NON-REGIONAL ADMISSIONS AT SCO

Southern College of Optometry welcomes applications from all states and countries. In each entering class of 120, a limited number of positions are reserved for competitive applicants from states participating in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) program. These states include:

Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. To be eligible for one of the reserved positions, the applicant must be a bona fide resident of that state and be so certified by the appropriate state authority. Residency certification instructions are available from the College upon request. Applicants receiving contracts receive substantial tuition assistance from the certifying state. It should be noted that residency certification does not guarantee a reserved position.

Applications for non-regional positions in an entering class are selected based on the criteria previously listed, and the best qualified candidates are offered tentative acceptance as non-regional applicants. Non-regional students are not subsidized by any state, and their tuition, therefore, is substantially higher.

### **ALPHA EPSILON DELTA (AED)**

Alpha Epsilon Delta is a pre-health honor society that seeks to provide information and opportunities for students with an interest in the health professions. The Tennessee Beta Chapter of AED is active at The University of Tennessee. AED activities include information sessions on preparing to apply to professional schools, local speakers from the medical community, trips to Tennessee medical schools and health centers, and service activities. The schedule of meetings is available at [aedutk.wixsite.com/aed-utk](http://aedutk.wixsite.com/aed-utk).

Requirements for membership include three terms of college (at least one at UTK), a cumulative GPA of 3.2, a science GPA of 3.2, and participation in AED sponsored events and meetings. Students interested in AED should first affiliate themselves with the organization as a pledge during the first semester of college attendance at UT. Applications for both pledge status and national membership are available in Arts and Sciences Advising Services, 313 Ayres Hall, and at the organizational website. A student who does not meet the criteria to become a national member may continue as a pledge.

Pre-health students wishing to receive notification of pre-health activities and AED events should send an e-mail to [asadvising@utk.edu](mailto:asadvising@utk.edu) to request to be added to the pre-health distribution list.

### **PRE-OPTOMETRY CLUB**

The purpose of the Pre-Optometry Club at The University of Tennessee is to focus on bringing students from around the campus together who are interested in seeking the optometry profession.

The club discusses topics such as:

- Optometry Schools in the United States
- Optometry Admissions Processes
- Eye Care today
- OAT workshops
- FAQ's about Optometry schools

For this organization, there will be several activities and community service events that the Pre-Optometry Club will be involved in to help others in the community. Optometrists, guest speakers, and optometry schools around the United States will be invited to speak to the Pre-Optometry Club at The University of Tennessee to help students gain more knowledge about the profession.

For more information, contact the organization's advisor, Carrie Trexler, at [ctrexler@utk.edu](mailto:ctrexler@utk.edu).

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM:**

American Optometric Association  
243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Floor 1  
St. Louis, Missouri 63141-7881  
(800) 365-2219  
[www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org)

Arts and Sciences Advising Services  
The University of Tennessee  
313 Ayres Hall  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1335  
(865) 974-4481  
[www.artsci.utk.edu/advising](http://www.artsci.utk.edu/advising)

Michael N. Robertson, MEd  
Director of Admissions and Enrollment Services  
Southern College of Optometry  
1245 Madison Avenue  
Memphis, Tennessee 38104  
(800) 238-0180  
[www.sco.edu](http://www.sco.edu)  
[mike.robertson@sco.edu](mailto:mike.robertson@sco.edu)

Joseph H. Hauser, MBA  
Vice President for Student Services  
Southern College of Optometry  
1245 Madison Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38104  
(800) 238-0180  
[jhauser@sco.edu](mailto:jhauser@sco.edu)

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
6110 Executive Blvd., Suite 420  
Rockville, Maryland 20852  
(301) 231-5944  
[www.optometriceducation.org/](http://www.optometriceducation.org/)

Optometry Centralized Application Service  
OptomCAS  
[www.optomcas.org](http://www.optomcas.org)

The information provided in this bulletin is subject to revision. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with a health professions advisor on a regular basis.

ADMISSION TO THE SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THAT COLLEGE; ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE AND COMPLETION OF THE PRE-OPTOMETRY PROGRAM IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DOES NOT ASSURE ADMISSION TO THE SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE  
EEO/TITLE IX/SECTION 504 STATEMENT

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.