

PREPARATION FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN OPTOMETRY

Important general information

Students interested in the pre-optometry career advising track must obtain a bachelor's degree and complete the necessary prerequisites for a Doctor of Optometry program. Those interested in pursuing optometry should consult with a pre-professional health career adviser to learn about requirements that are specific to the program and/or school to which they hope to apply.

Admission to and completion of a pre-optometry career advising track through VCU Career Services - Pre-Professional Health Career Advising (<https://careers.vcu.edu/majors-and-careers/career-pathways/health-care/>) does not constitute or guarantee admission to an optometry school. Students must apply separately to an optometry program of their choice at the appropriate time.

If interested in preparing for optometry school, students must declare an academic major and should declare and maintain their pre-optometry career advising track. Students do not earn a pre-optometry degree. Those unsure of their academic majors initially should clarify their academic interests through regular conversations with their academic adviser and pre-professional health career adviser. Pre-optometry students are encouraged to major in fields of greatest interest to them. To declare a pre-optometry career advising track, see the Pre-Professional Health Hub (<https://learningsystems.vcu.edu/canvas/>) in Canvas.

Prerequisites for an optometry program

It is recommended that students select a challenging course load of science and math courses each semester to ensure adequate preparation for the academic rigor of an optometry program.

Students need to complete their bachelor's degree, the required science prerequisite courses and the Optometry Admissions Test before becoming eligible to start an optometry program.

Science and non-science courses required for the pre-optometry doctoral program

General biology, cell biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry and physics are required science prerequisites for admission to optometry school. The science courses should be pre-professional level courses designed for science majors or health professional students and should offer laboratory experience. Eight hours of advanced human biological sciences are required; junior or senior-level anatomy or physiology is strongly recommended. Students should consult with a pre-professional health career adviser and academic adviser to see if the school they plan to apply to requires human anatomy.

General prerequisites for Doctor of Optometry programs

Course	Title	Hours
BIOL 151 & BIOZ 151	Introduction to Biological Sciences I and Introduction to Biological Science Laboratory I	4
BIOL 152 & BIOZ 152	Introduction to Biological Sciences II and Introduction to Biological Science Laboratory II	4

BIOL 303	Microbiology	3
CHEM 101 & CHEZ 101	General Chemistry I and General Chemistry Laboratory I	4
CHEM 102 & CHEZ 102	General Chemistry II and General Chemistry Laboratory II	4
CHEM 301 & CHEZ 301	Organic Chemistry and Organic Chemistry Laboratory I	5
CHEM 302 & CHEZ 302	Organic Chemistry and Organic Chemistry Laboratory II	5
CHEM 403	Biochemistry I	3
MATH 151	Precalculus Mathematics	4
MATH 200	Calculus with Analytic Geometry I	4
PHIS 206 & PHIZ 206	Human Physiology and Human Physiology Laboratory ⁴	4
PHYS 201 or PHYS 207	General Physics I ¹ University Physics I	4-5
PHYS 202 or PHYS 208	General Physics II ² University Physics II	4-5
PSYC 101 Play course video for Introduction to Psychology	Introduction to Psychology ³	4
STAT 210	Basic Practice of Statistics	3

Total Hours 59-61

¹

MATH 200 is a prerequisite for PHYS 207.

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MATH 201 is a prerequisite for PHYS 208.

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Students should visit the prospective school's website to confirm if BIOL 205 is required.

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Students should visit the prospective school's website to confirm if PHIS 206 is required.

Additional recommended prerequisites for optometry programs nationwide

Students are encouraged to review admissions requirements for the specific institution(s) that they are considering applying to as well as VCU course descriptions for prerequisite courses. Students should meet with a pre-professional health career adviser and their academic adviser to ensure they are on the correct path to declaring and/or maintaining their track, and to develop their curriculum plan.

Course	Title	Hours
BIOL 205	Basic Human Anatomy	4

Students should also consult with their academic adviser and pre-professional health career advisers to discuss an individual plan of study in parallel with their academic majors.