



OPTOMETRIST

What is an Optometrist?

Optometrists diagnose, manage and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system. They may specialize in fitting visual aids for people who are partially blind, fitting contact lenses or correcting special vision problems

Optometrists generally have the following responsibilities:

- Examining patients' eyes, conducting tests and using specialized instruments to determine visual efficiency;
- Prescribing treatment (excluding surgery) to conserve, improve and correct vision and other ocular disorders;
- Prescribing and fitting eyeglasses and contact lenses.
- Educating and counselling patients on contact lens use and care, visual hygiene, lighting arrangements, working distances and safety factors; and
- Referring patients to ophthalmologists or other physicians and surgeons for treatment of ocular or other diseases or conditions.

A career in optometry requires:

- A desire to help people;
- Good communication skills;
- Good spatial and form perception;
- Excellent analytical skills; and
- Good decision-making skills

How do you become an Optometrist?

In order to work as an optometrist in Saskatchewan you need:

- One to three years of college or university, with a concentration in mathematics and science courses, and a four-year university program in optometry;
- Successful completion of the national examination administered by the Canadian Examiners in Optometry; and
- Licensure by the Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists (<http://www.optometrists.sk.ca/>).

The Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists (SAO) is both the professional member organization and regulatory body for doctors of optometry in Saskatchewan. It enforces the *Optometry Act 1985*.

Where can you be trained to be an Optometrist?

Ontario

University of Waterloo

School of Optometry

<http://www.optometry.uwaterloo.ca/>

The Saskatchewan government purchases seats in the Optometry program at the University of Waterloo. These seats are reserved exclusively for qualified Saskatchewan students on a competitive basis.

What do you need to get into the University of Waterloo Optometry doctorate program?

Entry to the Doctor of Optometry program requires:

- At least two years of University courses in a science-related faculty; and
 - Completion of the Optometry Admission Test (OAT) with a score of 300 or above.
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What does an Optometrist study?

The first 2 years of the Optometry program at Waterloo focuses on the basic sciences of health and disease, optics, visual sciences, and begins clinical techniques. The upper years involve more clinical training and case analysis. The senior clinical training involves supervised work in the Eye Care Centre and sites off-campus, in hospitals, nursing homes, and other settings. In fourth year there are 2 externships, one of which will be spent at a major US hospital or clinic.

Where does an Optometrist work?

- Private Practice (solo and group)
 - Community Health Centres
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What is the salary of an Optometrist?

Optometrists' earnings vary, and are determined by several factors such as: coverage under provincial medical programs, fee schedules, hours worked, practice location, and patient population.

Related Link

Canadian Association of Optometrists
<http://www.opto.ca/>

Please check the Saskatchewan Health Bursary webpage for information about bursaries for health science students: http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp_bursaries.html