CENTER for PRE+HEALTH ADVISING

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Overview of Preparing for a Career in Optometry

First Step: Exploring Optometry

- What experiences have you had that make you interested in optometry?
- What are your goals and expectations for a major?
- What skills do you associate with a good optometrist? What activities/experiences would help you develop these skills?
- What can you do to learn more about careers in optometry?

Second Step: Getting Involved

- What are your goals and expectations for volunteer experiences? What have you learned or could you learn about yourself and other people by serving others?
- Consider the populations you have served or worked with in any capacity. Do you have breadth and depth of experi-ence with different groups of people?
- What are your research interests? What do you want to learn through research?
- Keep track of your experiences through college (volunteering, research, paid employment, shadowing, hobbies, student organizations, study abroad). Regularly reflect on and write about the competencies (skills and personal attri-butes) you develop and the ways you learn and grow in the course of each experience.

Third Step: Preparing Your Application

- Do you hope to apply after your junior year, or will you be a stronger applicant after taking a gap year (or two)?
- Develop meaningful relationships with faculty and supervisors by talking with them about their work and career paths, your coursework, and your interest in optometry.
- Talk with an advisor at CPHA about steps of the application process the summer before you apply.

Fourth Step: Taking a Gap Year

- What would your goals and expectations be for a gap year?
- What area of your application might you strengthen during a gap year? How could you do this?

Planning Table

Fall	Spring	Summer

Pre-Optometry Planning Guide

Keep in mind that course preparation varies from school to school. This is a summary of the most common requirements. The shaded courses are recommended but not required for most schools.

Course	Options at UW-Madison	For OAT
Math	Three options: • Math 211 • Math 221 • Math 171 and Math 217	No
General Chemistry	Two options: • Chemistry 103 (lecture + lab) and Chemistry 104 (lecture + lab) • Chemistry 109 (lecture + lab)	Yes
Organic Chemistry*	Chemistry 343 (lecture), Chemistry 344 (lab), and Chemistry 345 (lecture)	Yes
Biochemistry*	Two options: • Biochemistry 501 (lecture) • Biochemistry 507-508 (lecture)	No
Introductory Biology	Three options: • Zoology 101 (lecture), Zoology 102 (lab), and Botany 130 (lecture + lab) • Biology 151 (lecture + lab) and Biology 152 (lecture + lab) • Biocore	Yes
Microbiology	Two options: • Microbiology 101 (lecture) and Microbiology 102 (lab) • Microbiology 303 (lecture) and Microbiology 304 (lab)	No
Introductory Statistics	Four options: • Statistics 371 • Biostatistics 541 • Statistics 301 • Statistics course in your major, such as Psychology 210	No
Introductory Psychology	Psychology 202	No
English, Literature, or Communications	6 credits: many options; look for literature and composition courses	Helpful
Physics	Four options: • Physics 103-104 (not calculus-based; lecture + lab) • Physics 207-208 (calculus-based; lecture + lab) • Physics 201-202 (for engineering students; lecture + lab) • EMA 201 and Physics 202 (for BME students; lecture + lab)	Yes
Anatomy	Anatomy 337 (lecture)	No
Physiology	Two options: • Physiology 335 (lecture + lab) • Physiology 435 (lecture + lab)	No

*Schools vary in requirements for Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry. Find out what your schools of interest require.

Resources

Tutoring resources available on UW campus

- Greater University Tutoring Services (GUTS) — http://guts.wisc.edu
- Peer Learning Association (PLA) — https://win.wisc.edu/organization/pla
- Chemistry Learning Center (CLC) — https://www.chem.wisc.edu/areas/clc
- Physics Learning Center (PLC) — https://www.physics.wisc.edu/plc
- Math Lab — https://www.math.wisc.edu/undergraduate/mathlab
- Statistics Lab — https://www.stat.wisc.edu/courses/Tutorial_Schedule
- Writing Center — http://www.writing.wisc.edu

Professional organizations

- American Optometric Association — http://www.aoa.org
- Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry — http://www.opted.org
- UW Pre-Optometry Club — https://win.wisc.edu/organization/preoptometry