It is our goal at UND to prepare students for any of the 22 optometry schools in the country. Indeed, our undergraduates have been accepted at optometry schools from coast to coast. Seats in optometry school entering classes are limited – all together less than 1,800 seats are available across the country each year. The national ratio of qualified applicants per available seat is approximately 1.5:1. Getting accepted into any optometry school is done through a competitive, two stage application process. It is extremely important that you are well prepared and able to present the best possible application to optometry schools when you apply - good planning is key!

The Pre-Optometry Program is not a major or degree granting program at UND. In order to graduate with a degree from UND, you will need to:

- Choose a **Major** and complete the specific requirements determined by the department responsible for that major
- Complete the **Essential Studies Requirements**
- Complete 125 semester credits (36 of which must be upper divisional credits)

You will be assigned two advisors while pursuing your degree and the Pre-Optometry Program at UND:

- A major advisor (from your major department) to help with the planning of your major curriculum
- The Health Sciences Advisor (from the College of Arts & Sciences) to help with all aspects of optometry school preparation

**Joining** the Pre-Optometry Program is easy!:

1. Incoming freshmen students should plan to attend Summer Orientation - you can declare Pre-Opt at that time
2. Current or transfer students can declare Pre-Opt by stopping by the A&S main office or by calling us at 701-777-2749

**Staying** in the Pre-Optometry Program is hard!:

1. **Incoming Freshmen** must:
   - Attend all freshmen group advising meetings during the fall semester
   - Attend one freshmen group advising meeting during the spring semester
   - Complete the following courses, with a C grade or better, before the start of sophomore year:
     - Bio 150-151, with labs
     - Math 103 (may test out of this with an ACT Math score of 26, or appropriate Math placement test score)
     - Chem 121-122, with labs
   - Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during freshman year
2. **Transfer students, or current students** switching to Pre-Optometry after freshman year, must:
   - If not already completed at UND or transferred in, complete the following courses with a C grade or better:
     - Bio 150-151, with labs
     - Math 103
     - Chem 121-122, with labs
   - Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
3. **All continuing Pre-Optometry students** must:
   - Take Pre-Optometry courses as advised
   - Prepare for and take the OAT
   - Keep cumulative GPA and science GPA competitive
Optometry schools consider a variety of factors when reviewing applications:

1. **Academics**
   a. **Undergraduate Preparation**
      Although not required, most optometry schools prefer a 4 year undergraduate degree (BS, BA, etc.) from an accredited college or university. All optometry schools have specific content or course prerequisites which are included in the UND Pre-Optometry Program. UND accepts AP and post-secondary transfer credits toward the completion of a bachelor’s degree in accordance with the NDUS policies of [General Education Requirement Transfer Agreement](http://und.edu/academics/registrar/fields-of-study.cfm) (GERTA) and [Common Course Numbering](http://und-public.courseleaf.com/4yearplan/) (CCN). UND also has numerous articulation agreements and course equivalencies with other academic institutions. You should, however, check with the optometry schools on your wish list regarding the post-UND implications of any AP, IB, CIS, CLEP, on-line, distance learning or community college work you plan to complete prior to your undergraduate matriculation.

   b. **Major**
      Optometry schools do not require any particular major. Pre-Optometry program students have completed such majors as Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Studies, Communication, Criminal Justice, Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Foreign Language, Forensic Science, History, Honors, Interdisciplinary Studies, Math, Nutrition, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology.

      The choice for a major is entirely up to you! You should pick something you are good at, or enjoy studying, or fits your “plan B” if you don’t end up going to optometry school. A list of each major and degree offered at UND may be found at: [http://und.edu/academics/registrar/fields-of-study.cfm](http://und.edu/academics/registrar/fields-of-study.cfm). Click on a particular major to see what you will be studying, as well as opportunities and careers associated with that major. For specific requirements and course descriptions, click on the [Academics – Check out the courses you’ll take](http://und-public.courseleaf.com/4yearplan/) link on the right side of each major page. Four year plans (i.e., schedule of courses) for each degree are listed by college and are posted online at: [http://und-public.courseleaf.com/4yearplan/](http://und-public.courseleaf.com/4yearplan/).

      The combination of the Pre-Optometry Program with a major in the College of Arts and Sciences can usually be finished in 4 years if both major and Pre-Optometry are started freshmen year. The combination of the Pre-Optometry program with a major in Athletic Training, Aviation, Dietetics, Engineering, Education, Nursing, Nutrition or Medical Laboratory Science will take longer. Because these majors include busy curricula and/or practicums, in most cases if you plan to combine one of them with Pre-Optometry, you will need at least 5 years of undergraduate studies to do so.

   c. **GPA**
      Since optometry school curriculum is considerably more challenging than any undergraduate curricula, you need to leave no doubt of your academic ability by excelling at the undergraduate level. Average cumulative GPA of recent optometry school matriculants: 3.40 - 3.60.

2. **OAT**
   a. **Timing**
      This challenging exam is required by all optometry schools – students planning to finish their undergraduate degrees in 4 years typically take the OAT in May or June after their 3rd year (junior year) of college. While retakes are allowed, it is best to “do it right the first time”.

   b. **Preparation**
      Since considerable time (20+ hours/week) needs to go into OAT preparation, students are encouraged to take a lighter load (12 credits) during the spring semester of their junior year to give them room to take an online OAT review course, or for reviewing and practice testing on their own.

   c. **Scores**
      Average OAT score for recent optometry school matriculants: 320.
3. Relevant Life Experiences
   a. Shadowing = 40+ hours
   - Get a good feel for the profession by shadowing optometrists in several different settings
   - Be sure to include both rural and city experiences
   b. Direct Patient Care Experience => 200+ hours
   - Optometry schools expect you to spend considerable time working in their field. You need to work in an eye care setting (clinic, store, etc.) where you give direct care to patients, and have a supervisor observing you
   - This will come in handy when you apply to optometry schools since most of them require a letter of recommendation from an optometrist and a health care work supervisor
   c. Community Service => These activities will set you apart!
   - Do things that you love, have a passion for, demonstrate your desire to serve others and give back, show your love of learning, let your leadership skills shine, etc.
   - These volunteer activities/paid jobs include, but are not limited to:
     - Lifeguards, first responders
     - Coaching/teaching sports (for park boards, travelling leagues, Special Olympics, etc.)
     - Camp counseling (church camps, day camps, medical camps, music camps, etc.)
     - Big Brother/Big Sister, Meals on Wheels, Relay for Life, etc.
     - Volunteering at your local city mission, free clinic, humane society, etc.
     - College organization participation or leadership (clubs, honor societies, sororities/fraternities, etc.)
     - College tutoring or TA positions
     - Medical missions trips (through college organizations, national organizations, or local churches)
     - Church work/sponsored activities (Sunday school teacher, youth worker, mission trips, etc.)
     - American Red Cross, Peace Corps
   d. Keep a log of all hours
      Although formal documentation is not needed, you should keep a simple personal log for all experiences/work in a notebook – be sure to include dates, times, activities, impressions, and note any meaningful patients or experiences. You will also need to provide contact information for someone who witnessed you in each experience or circumstance, so make note of that as well!

4. Letters of Recommendation
   a. You will need 3-4 letters of recommendation or evaluation for most optometry schools.
   b. Letters need to address the personal attributes and academic abilities that make you a good fit for optometry school and the profession of optometry.
   c. Letter authors will have to include professors, work supervisors and peers who know the you very well.

5. Legal Record
   a. Keep legal records clean. All minors and felonies will need to be disclosed on applications.
   b. Keep university records clean. Any institutional actions for code of student conduct violations (behavioral, academic, legal, etc.) will need to be disclosed on applications.
   c. Keep personal social media sites clean (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Be sure to demonstrate integrity, maturity, wholesomeness and good taste in all postings (verbal, photos, pictures, etc.).

6. Home State Residency
   Optometry schools consider your home state of residency to be where you graduated high school and/or where your parents live. You do not become a resident of a state by just attending college there!
Courses included in the UND Pre-Optometry Program fall into one (or more) of three categories. These categories are:

1. Requirements for most optometry schools
2. Good preparation for the OAT
3. Good, additional preparation for most optometry schools

The checklist below will help you keep track of your progress in the Pre-Optometry Program:

**UND Courses required by most optometry schools** (all but Calc, English and Psych are needed for OAT preparation):

- Biol 150, 150L  General Biology I
- Biol 151, 151L  General Biology II
- Chem 121, 121L  General Chemistry I
- Chem 122, 122L  General Chemistry II
- Organic Chemistry (choose one)
  - Chem 341+L & 342+L  Organic Chemistry I and II
- BMB 301  Biochemistry
- Phys 211, 211L  College Physics I
- Phys 212, 212L  College Physics II
- Anat 204, 204L  Anatomy for Paramed Personnel
- A Physiology course (choose one)
  - Biol 442  Physiology of Organs/Systs (for Bio majors)
  - PPT 301  Human Physiology (for other majors)
- Mbio 302, 302L  General Microbiology

**UND electives good for optometry school preparation (take as many as desired – all are optional):**

- Biol 315  Genetics
- Biol 315R  Genetics Recitation
- Biol 341  Cell Biology
- Bio 369, 369L  Histology
- Bio 420  Neuroscience
- MBio 328  Immunology

- Math (choose one)
  - Math 146  Applied Calculus
  - Math 165  Calculus I
  - Math 165-166  Calculus I and II
  - AP credit for Calculus

- Statistics (choose one)
  - Psyc 241  Psychological Statistics
  - Soc 326  Sociological Statistics

- Engl 110  Composition I
- Engl 130  Composition II
- Psyc 111  Introduction to Psychology

- A Business course (your choice)
  - Badm 101
  - Econ 201
  - Econ 202
  - Mgmt 300
Your course schedule at UND will vary depending on your major. Ultimately, all students, regardless of major, will be able to take the courses covering the content they need for the OAT and optometry school. The chart below shows complete major and Pre-Optometry science and math course schedules for both Biology and Chem/Biochem majors. For students pursuing other majors, only the science and math Pre-Optometry courses are listed so they will need to "pencil in" their major requirements as well. Also, all UND students will need to add any additional major requirements, Essential Studies requirements, and other electives to each semester in the schedules below as needed or desired:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
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<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
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<td>Bio majors:</td>
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<td>• Bio 120</td>
<td>• Chem 341+</td>
<td>• Physics 211, 211L</td>
<td>• Bio 480</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bio 150, 150L</td>
<td>• Chem 341, 341L</td>
<td>• Bio 442, 442L</td>
<td>• Bio requirement**</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chem 121, 121L</td>
<td>• Chem 315 (Genetics)</td>
<td>• Chem 333, 333L (for minor)</td>
<td>• Anat 204, 204L or Other Bio requirement**</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Math 103</td>
<td>• Bio 315R (Genetics Recitation)</td>
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<td>Chem/Biochem majors:</td>
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<td>Chem/Biochem majors:</td>
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<td>• Chem 101</td>
<td>• Chem 391</td>
<td>• Chem 466</td>
<td>• BMB 401, 403</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chem 121, 121L</td>
<td>• Chem 360</td>
<td>• Chem 333, 333L or Bio 315?</td>
<td>• Chem 492 or 495?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bio 150, 150L</td>
<td>• Chem 333, 333L or Bio 315?</td>
<td>• Anat 204+L or Bio 442+L</td>
<td>• Bio elective?**</td>
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<td>• Math 103</td>
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<td>• Chem 333, 333L (for minor)</td>
<td>• Your major requirements?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Everyone:</td>
<td>Everyone:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses from Group 1*</td>
<td>Courses from Group 1 or 2*</td>
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<td>Courses from Group 2, 3 or 4*</td>
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<td>• Bio 312 (Evolution)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bio 341 is offered at UND during the summer — to help lighten their load during the regular school year, students may wish to do it after freshman or sophomore year (once Bio 150-151 and Chem 121-122 are completed) ......</td>
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* Courses in Group 1 are required for all majors. Courses from Groups 2, 3 and 4 are options for Bio requirements/electives or other electives.

Group 1: Eng 110 or 130, Psych 111, Soc 110, Comm 110, Badm 101 or Econ 201 or Econ 202, a Stats class (Psych 241 or Soc 326); additionally, the Chem/Biochem major also requires a level 2 proficiency in a Foreign Language (i.e., Span 101 and 102)

**Group 2 Fall courses: Bio 315, Med 205
**Group 3 Fall courses: Chem 333, business/management/finance course;
**Group 4 Fall courses: Bio 420, Mbio 328;
**Group 2 Spring courses: Bio 341, Med 205
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**Group 4 Spring courses: Bio 369+L

PPT 301
Anat 204+L or Bio 315?
Your major requirements?

WICHE Forms — ND, MT, WY res only
(Complete over Spring Break)
OAT (1st one by June 15th)
1st Opt School Apps Due
(Submit to OptimCAS by July 15th)

Take a lighter credit load (12 credits)
For OAT prep or OAT prep course

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