



OPTOMETRY



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.



CONTENTS

**03 ABOUT THE SCHOOL
OF OPTOMETRY**

05 WHY OPTOMETRY

06 CURRICULUM

**11 APPLICATION
REQUIREMENTS**

12 HOW TO APPLY



Other optometry schools
make you a great optometrist,
UABSO makes you
a great doctor.

Because we are surrounded
by other health professions,
we have access to some
of the best medical
technology in the world and
leading experts in numerous
medical fields.

Chan Lee
Class of 2021



ABOUT UABSO

The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry (UABSO) is one of the nation's leaders in educating optometrists and vision scientists, participating in cutting-edge research and providing high-quality and compassionate health care.

In addition to our four-year Optometry program, areas of study include graduate degrees in Vision Science and three dual degree programs: OD/MBA, OD/MPH and OD/MS. Developed in partnership with UAB's Collat School of Business, the OD/MBA degree is the only academic program of its kind in the nation. UABSO was the first optometry school to establish a residency program. Today, UABSO offers six affiliated residency programs for additional training in optometry with 12 highly-competitive spots.

UABSO is one of few optometry schools in the nation that is also part of an academic medical center. Our student clinicians have thousands of hours of supervised patient care at our two clinics and during externships. Our Community Eye Care program, which provides care to those who are uninsured and underinsured, also provides valuable experience to students. It is through this program that they learn the importance of providing compassionate care to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Our faculty ranks high in the field of Optometry and includes winners of the American Optometric Association (AOA) Educators of the Year award and of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) Rising Star award. The UAB School of Optometry has been the only school of optometry to win the National Eye Institute's Audacious Goals Competition, and stands among only 10 winners chosen from over 500 entries world-wide. UABSO faculty has written more than 36 optometry textbooks during our 50-year history.

Upon completing their studies, our students are prepared to practice at the highest level of evidence-based patient care, to continue advancing the profession through clinical research and to become leaders in their chosen career path. The UAB School of Optometry stands to continue as a bastion of optometric education that launches the careers of young optometrists and vision scientists across the nation and around the world.



I love the versatility of the profession. You can own your own practice, work for a corporate company, teach or do research.

Turner Altman
Class of 2021



WHY OPTOMETRY



Help people and
improve their
lives



Protect and
restore vision



Intellectually
challenging



Flexibility and
work/life balance

1

**STRONG
PATIENT RELATIONSHIPS**

2

EARNING POTENTIAL

3

CAREER AUTONOMY



CURRICULUM

EARNING A DOCTORATE OF OPTOMETRY

The UAB School of Optometry provides a vibrant, comprehensive and ever-expanding curriculum reflective of the environment in which it is offered: a world class academic medical center. The four-year professional program prepares you to be a leader in providing comprehensive, evidence-based eye care.

To begin your training, you'll focus on both basic science and vision science. Your courses will include topics such as optics, neuroscience, gross anatomy, eye movements, public health optometry, glaucoma, pediatric optometry, contact lenses, low vision rehabilitation, binocular vision, and more.

Early in your education, spring semester of your first year, you'll begin transitioning to the clinical aspect of your optometric education. During your final year, you'll be completely focused on clinical rotations (externships) both on and off campus. Externships are an integral part of your curriculum, ensuring that you participate in diverse clinical experiences prior to graduating.



EARN AN ADDITIONAL DEGREE



The UAB School of Optometry offers three dual-degree programs that expand both your learning and career opportunities. All dual-degree programs are designed to be completed during your four years of optometric education.

OD/MBA DUAL DEGREE

When you open your own optometry practice, you're both an eye doctor and an entrepreneur and you need a keen understanding of business in order to succeed. The OD/MBA degree gives you the necessary tools to make your vision a reality. Your business courses will cover such topics as Strategic Management, Accounting and Finance for Managers, Information Technology and Business Strategy, and Marketing Strategy.

OD/MPH DUAL DEGREE

You want to protect the vision of your patients—and of your entire community. We will train you to assess community needs for vision care services, determine how to treat, and prevent diseases, and raise awareness for eye care.

In fact, not only will the OD/MPH teach you to develop, administer, and evaluate eye and vision health programs in research projects, you'll learn how to design and conduct epidemiological field studies, use statistical methods in data analysis of case-control and cohort studies, develop and implement vision health education programs, and develop occupational-health and eye-safety programs.

OD/MS DUAL DEGREE

The OD/MS prepares students for careers that combine clinical optometry and clinical and/or basic research in vision science. You'll have a deeper understanding of the eye and how it connects with the rest of the body. You can simultaneously earn your OD/MS degree while researching topics such as dry eye disease, vision therapy, biomedical optics and more.



LEARN CLINICAL SKILLS

Optometry faculty, residents and students see over 22,000 pediatric and adult patients each year in UAB Eye Care, our 34,000 square foot state of the art teaching clinic and affiliated clinics.

SPECIALTY CLINICS

- Primary Care Clinic
- Corneal & Contact Lens Clinic
- Ocular Disease & Low Vision Clinic
- Dry Eye Clinic
- Myopia Clinic
- Pediatrics Clinic

AFFILIATED CLINICS

- Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind
- Bell Center for children at risk of developmental delays
- Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation
- LINCpoint, a United Cerebral Palsy Center
- Low Birth Weight Clinic at Children's Hospital
- Nursing homes


COMMUNITY EYE CARE

This is the mobile outreach arm of UAB Eye Care. Our students and clinicians provide care to the uninsured and underinsured. Clinical care is provided at Western Eye Care, the Alabama Black Belt region and throughout the Birmingham-area and region.

BLAZERVISION

The school partners with the Department of Ophthalmology to ensure that each UAB student athlete receives comprehensive eye care, acute game-time care, state of the art concussion baseline testing and a multi-system approach to impact evaluation.



A male optometrist with a beard, wearing a white lab coat, is shown in a clinical setting. He is leaning over a patient, adjusting a phoropter on their face. The background is slightly blurred, showing medical equipment and a computer monitor. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter, and a thick green border frames the central text area.

**THE CLINICAL
EXPERIENCE IS
THE MOST CRITICAL
ASPECT OF YOUR
OPTOMETRIC
EDUCATION**



Birmingham has a small town feel, yet offers many amenities of a much bigger city. There are many interesting restaurants, parks, and study spots in Birmingham that make me want to really explore all that Birmingham has to offer.

Emily Howard
Class of 2022



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

You must successfully complete the following required courses to be eligible for admission to UABSO. These courses should be completed prior to the summer leading to your program matriculation.

- 1 year of biology with labs*
- 1 course of microbiology
- 1 course of biochemistry
- 1 year of general chemistry with labs
- 1 course of organic chemistry with a lab
- 1 year of physics with labs
- 1 course of calculus
- 1 course of statistics**
- 1 year of English
- 1 course of psychology**
- 1 year of social and behavioral science***

OPTOMETRY ADMISSIONS TEST (OAT)

Applicants are encouraged to take the Optometry Admissions Test, which is offered online. We suggest taking the exam during the spring/early summer of the year preceding anticipated application. If the results of the exam are considered to be unsatisfactory, you then have the opportunity to repeat the exam during the summer/early fall of the application year. The exam can be retaken 90 days after the first test date. Other professional school entrance exams may be considered on a case-by-case basis. www.opted.org

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

UABSO requires either a composite recommendation from the Health Professions Advisory Committee (if available) or 3 individual letters. If the composite recommendation cannot be provided, then the three letters should be from (2) faculty members who have knowledge of your scholastic abilities and personal characteristics and (1) optometrist with whom you have shadowed and/or worked.

**One year is equal to two semesters or three quarters.*

***A statistics course taken in a psychology department may not be counted for fulfillment of both the psychology prerequisite and the statistics prerequisite.*

****Any combination of two semesters or two quarters in courses such as sociology, economics, anthropology, history, political science, religion or additional psychology.*

OBSERVATION / SHADOWING EXPERIENCE

We require a minimum of 40 shadowing or observation hours. These shadowing hours indicate your interest in optometry and will provide you with invaluable insight regarding the profession of Optometry.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

- Candidates for admission must meet all of the requirements for admissions to the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the School of Optometry.
- Applicants must have completed a minimum of 90 semester hours, the equivalent of three years of college education, prior to matriculation. However, preference is given to applicants who have received their 4-year degree or will receive their degree prior to matriculation.
- All courses must be taken at a fully accredited institution and must be acceptable to the institution for degree credit and major requirements.
- No more than 60 semester hours earned at a 2-year institution may be applied to the credit hour requirement.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Apply early! UABSO is on a rolling admissions system.
- Although a science degree is not required, it is helpful. If you plan to obtain a degree in a major other than a science-based major, you need to excel in the required science prerequisite courses.
- Continue to shadow optometrists after you reach the 40-hour minimum. Something can be learned from every experience.

WHY UAB?

UAB is diverse, and we're proud of that. In fact, we have one of the most diverse campuses in the nation according to the Princeton Review. Our diversity includes interests, thoughts, and life experiences.

With a metropolitan population of 1 million, Birmingham has the amenities of a big city while maintaining the warmth and hospitality of a southern town. The "Magic City" is in the midst of an urban renaissance with a thriving food and craft beer scene, new parks and green space, new and repurposed urban loft condos and apartments, nationally renowned restaurants, live music, and recreational opportunities.



HOW TO APPLY

UABSO utilizes OptomCAS, the Optometry Centralized Application Service www.optomcas.org. Through this service applicants may submit an application and have it sent to multiple optometry schools of their choice. OptomCAS serves as your primary application. You will upload your college transcripts, OAT scores, and input your shadowing hours. Additionally, you will direct those writing recommendation letters for you to OptomCAS.

UAB SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION

In addition to the OptomCAS application, we have a supplemental application that contains some questions not included on the OptomCAS application. You can access the supplemental application through the OptomCAS website.

Instructions:

- From your OptomCAS application, select the Program Materials box. This tab will allow you to select UABSO from the list of schools.
- On the school's page, select the "Supplemental Application" link.





The University of Alabama at Birmingham

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