

Training

Optometrists study for five years to gain a Bachelor of Optometry at University of Auckland. Students are required to apply to enter the second year of the degree. Some places are designated for rural or Maori and Pacific Island students. The first year is either one year BSc in Biomedical Science at the University of Auckland or one year of Health Science First Year at the University of Otago. Students are selected on the basis of grade point average and personal qualities demonstrated during a selection interview. Entry into the BOptom is limited to 50 to 55 places each year.

During the five years anatomy, optics, diseases, using the equipment, how to work with people, clinical practice and lenses are studied.

Useful school subjects include biology, chemistry, physics, maths and English.



Personal Qualities

Optometrists need to:

- be very precise and accurate
- be an excellent communicator and listener
- responsible and careful
- very well organised
- friendly, patient, helpful
- be good at problem solving
- like working with people



Information collated by NZIRH
Where to go for more information:

www.odob.health.nz
www.careers.govt.nz
www.kiaorahauora.org.nz

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November 2019

Optometry



What do they do?

Optometrists

Optometrists examine eyes to diagnose and provide the right solution for vision problems. They also diagnose, monitor and manage eye diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Optometrists need to understand:

- the anatomy and mechanisms of eyes
- eye diseases and causes of vision problems
- lenses, contact lenses and frames for glasses
- eye examination equipment.
- How to manage a business if they own their own practice.



Optometrists may do some or all of the following:

- examine eyes to diagnose vision problems and eye diseases
- provide solutions to vision problems
- monitor and manage eye diseases, such as cataracts and glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy
- prescribe medicines for eye diseases
- prescribe and fit glasses, contact lenses and other visual aids
- advise clients on appropriate eyewear products, eg frames for glasses, different types of contact lens
- advise people on ideal computer set-up and lighting
- run their own business.

Where do they work?

Mainly optometrists work in private practices, retail chains and specialist eye clinics. They may start their own practice or become a partner in an existing practice.

The chance of getting work as an optometrist is good due to:

- an ageing population and eyesight tends to get worse with age
- a shortage of optometrists in hospitals
- an increase in chronic conditions that affect eyes, such as diabetes.

