

Optician

Fit and sell glasses and contact lenses from a prescription. Two years of college, a licence in every province, and a job that is half health care, half retail.

TYPICAL PAY

\$59,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$37k to \$82k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Optical stores, optometry clinics, eyewear chains, lens labs

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Grade 12 English and math, plus a science. Georgian College asks for biology, chemistry or physics.
- 2 Opticianry diploma** 2 years
2 years. Georgian College in Ontario runs a co-op version. NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) delivers the theory online while you work in an optical store. Optics, lens design, frame fitting, contact lenses, and the business of eyewear.
- 3 Supervised practice** During and after the program
In Ontario you register as an intern optician and log 1,000 hours of supervised dispensing and 250 eyeglass fittings before the exam.
- 4 NACOR (National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators) exams** After your hours
A national eyeglasses exam, and a separate contact lens exam if you want to fit contacts. \$875 each.
- 5 Register with your provincial college** A few weeks
For example the College of Opticians of Ontario. Then you can use the title and dispense on your own.

Pros and cons

- + Two years of school and often paid while you study
- + A licence that works in every province
- + Clean, calm work with no blood or emergencies
- Starting pay is close to retail
- Retail hours: evenings and Saturdays
- Sales targets at the big chains

Good to know

Three eye jobs, one counter

People mix them up constantly. The optician fits and sells the glasses. The optometrist examines your eyes and writes the prescription. The ophthalmologist is a surgeon. Opticians train for 2 years, optometrist...

About 5,000 strong

The Opticians Association of Canada counts a little over 5,000 members across the country. It is a small profession compared with dentistry or nursing, which is part of why licensed opticians are stea...

Optional boosts

Contact lens licence. Refraction. Store management. Your own store.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Opticians, wages (updated Nov 2025)

National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators: examination fees

College of Opticians of Ontario

Georgian College: Opticianry diploma

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/optician>



Scan for the full clicker