

Optometrist

Eye exams, glasses, contacts and eye disease. Six figures with regular hours, but only one English-language school in Canada.

TYPICAL PAY

\$110,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$85k to \$162k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

7 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Optometry clinics, optical retail chains, hospitals

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics, calculus and English.
- 2 University science** 3 to 4 years
At least 3 years, and most successful applicants finish a 4-year degree. Specific prerequisites include organic chemistry, physics, statistics and psychology.
- 3 OAT (optometry admission test)** One day, during university
A computer test of biology, chemistry, physics, reading and quantitative reasoning.
- 4 OD (doctor of optometry) degree** 4 years
4 years. Waterloo is the only English-language program in Canada; Université de Montréal teaches in French. Many Canadians study in the US instead.
- 5 OEBC (Optometry Examining Board of Canada) exams and provincial licence** A few months
A written exam and a hands-on skills exam, then register with your provincial college.

Pros and cons

- + Six-figure pay with regular hours
- + No residency required
- + A mix of medicine, technology and retail
- Only one English-language school in Canada
- Retail chains push volume and sales
- Exams get repetitive

Good to know

One school, in English

The University of Waterloo trains every English-speaking optometrist educated in Canada, about 90 a year. Everyone else studies at the Université de Montréal or in the US.

Eye doctors, not surgeons

Optometrists diagnose and treat many eye conditions and can prescribe eye drops in most provinces, but surgery is done by ophthalmologists, who are medical doctors.

Optional boosts

Residency. Dry eye and myopia control clinics. Specialty contact lenses. Ownership.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Optometrists, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Canadian Association of Optometrists

Optometry Examining Board of Canada: exam fees

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science: financial considerations

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/optometrist>



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