

# Admissions

CCO considers for admission those students who possess the academic, professional, and personal qualities necessary for development as exemplary optometrists. CCO uses multiple criteria to select the most qualified candidates including cumulative and science grade point averages (GPAs), entrance exam scores (e.g. OAT), personal experiences and character, ability to communicate, familiarity with the profession, volunteer/community involvement, research experience, and other considerations. CCO uses a rolling admissions process.

## Admission Requirements

Students seeking admission to CCO must submit the following documented evidence:

1. A minimum cumulative GPA and science coursework GPA of 2.75 on a 4.00 scale.
2. A baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution. A B.A. degree is acceptable, but a B.S. degree is preferred.
3. Results of one of the following admission tests. Applicants must submit scores from one of the following admission tests: Optometry Admission Test (OAT), Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), Dental Aptitude Test (DAT), Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT), or the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). A competitive test score (at least at or above the mean score for each exam) is recommended of all applicants. In order to be considered for the class to be admitted in the Fall of each academic year, the admission test must be taken and results submitted by April 30th of the year of matriculation. Entrance exam scores must be earned no more than five years prior to the planned enrollment year.
4. Necessary course prerequisites. All prerequisite courses must be completed with grades of C or better prior to matriculation. Only courses designed for science majors or pre-professional students are acceptable for the science prerequisites.
5. Two letters of recommendation. One letter must be from a practicing optometrist. The other letter must be from a prehealth advisor, a professor, an employer or an extracurricular activity advisor. Letters of recommendation from relatives, personal and/or family friends are not acceptable.
6. A good understanding of optometric medicine. Candidates are strongly encouraged to shadow and observe a number of practicing optometrists in the clinical setting.
7. Extracurricular and/or community activities that indicate a well-rounded background and demonstrate a commitment to service.
8. Interpersonal and communication skills necessary to relate effectively with others.
9. Passage of criminal background check.
10. A commitment to abide by the Midwestern University Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Abuse Policy.

## Prerequisite Courses

Course	Sem Hrs	Qtr Hrs
Biology with lab	8	12
General/Inorganic Chemistry with lab	8	12
Organic Chemistry with lab	4	6
Physics	6	9
Calculus	3	4
Microbiology	3	4
Statistics	3	4
Psychology	3	4
English	6	9

*Note: CCO strongly recommends the following courses: Anatomy, Physiology, and Biochemistry.*

The Doctor of Optometry degree program is rigorous and challenging. The Admissions Committee will therefore assess the quality and rigor of the pre-optometry academic records presented by applicants. When assessing an application, the Admissions Committee will view with concern applicants with:

1. Cumulative and science grade point averages below 3.00 on a 4.00 scale.
2. Admission test scores below the mean for each exam.
3. Prerequisite science coursework completed more than 10 years ago. More recent (within five years) math and science coursework is preferred.

## Application Process and Deadlines

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early in the cycle. Applications are considered on a first come first served basis only until all seats are filled.

### 1. OptomCAS Application

Applicants are required to submit online applications and application fees to OptomCAS by April 1, 2024. In addition to the online application and application fees, an applicant must forward to OptomCAS official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended by the April 1st date. OptomCAS will begin the verification process as official transcripts are received, however an application will not be considered complete until all official transcripts are received. Students must apply for admission via OptomCAS at [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org) or [www.optomcas.org](http://www.optomcas.org). Please refer to the OptomCAS application instructions for specific details about completing the OptomCAS application, required documents, and processing times. OptomCAS applications are available starting Summer 2023 for applicants seeking admission in August of the following year. Due to the large number of applicants and the limited number of seats available, students are strongly encouraged to complete their OptomCAS application early in the cycle. CCO will consider completed applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all seats are filled.

### 2. Admission Test Score

CCO prefers the OAT, but will accept the MCAT, DAT, PCAT, or GRE test scores as an alternative. Applicants must arrange for scores from the admission exam to be sent directly to Midwestern University. Only test scores received directly from the testing agency will be accepted. Any of these admission exam scores must be earned no more than five years prior to the planned enrollment year. Additional information on the OAT may be found at [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org) or in writing to:

*Optometry Admission Testing Program*

*211 East Chicago Avenue*

*Chicago, Illinois 60611*

*800/232-1694*

*email: [ootexam@ada.org](mailto:ootexam@ada.org)*

### 3. Letters of Recommendation

Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation from professionals to OptomCAS ([www.optomcas.org](http://www.optomcas.org)). One letter must be from a practicing optometrist. The other letter must be from a prehealth advisor, a professor, an employer, or an extracurricular activity advisor. Letters of recommendation from relatives, personal and/or family friends are not acceptable.

### 4. Completed Application

All application materials, including the OptomCAS application, admission test scores (as reported to Midwestern University), and two letters of recommendation (as submitted to OptomCAS) must be received by the Office of Admissions on or before April 30, 2024. Only completed applications received by the Office of Admissions on or before the deadline date will be reviewed for potential entrance into the program.

*Please Note:* Applicants are responsible for tracking the receipt of application materials and verifying the status on the University website. The Office of Admissions will send qualified applicants instructions for checking the status of application materials online.

Applicants are responsible for notifying the Office of Admissions of any changes in mailing address or e-mail address.

Midwestern University  
Office of Admissions  
555 31st Street Downers Grove, IL 60515  
630/515-7200 or 800/458-6253  
[admissil@midwestern.edu](mailto:admissil@midwestern.edu)

## Rolling Admissions

CCO uses a rolling admissions process in which applications are processed and reviewed during regular intervals in the admissions cycle until the class is filled.

## Interview Process

Before an invitation is issued to attend an on-campus interview, applicants must meet the admission requirements listed previously. After the Office of Admissions receives all required application materials, applicant files are reviewed to determine whether an applicant merits an invitation for an interview. Applicants may also be placed on a waiting list pending possible openings in a later part of the admissions cycle. Interviews are typically held between September and May of a given admission cycle. Invited applicants must attend an on-campus interview, unless otherwise specified, to achieve further consideration in the admissions process.

The interview day, which includes a closed-file interview session, generally takes six hours. Applicants will be evaluated on verbal communication skills, understanding of the optometry profession, commitment to patient care, and other elements as determined by the College. Applicants will also learn more about Midwestern University, CCO, financial aid programs, student services, and campus housing, as well as tour the Midwestern University Downers Grove Campus and Eye Institute.

Following the interview, an applicant's file will be forwarded to the Admissions Committee for review. The committee may recommend accepting, denying, or placing students on an alternate list. Recommendations are then forwarded to the Dean for final approval. The Dean, via the Office of Admissions, notifies applicants within two weeks of the interview date, provided that the file is complete.

Any request for withdrawal of an application must be made in writing.

## Technical Standards

The Technical Standards set forth the nonacademic abilities considered essential for students to achieve the level of competence required by the faculty to obtain the academic degree awarded by the College. The health care provider must be able to perform tasks in an efficient and timely manner to diagnose, treat, and manage patients.

Therefore, the following abilities and expectations must be met by all students admitted to the College with reasonable accommodation. Candidates must have abilities and skills in five areas: 1) observation; 2)

communication; 3) motor; 4) intellectual, conceptual, integrative, quantitative; 5) behavioral and social. Technological compensation can be made for some limitation in certain of these areas but the candidates must be able to perform in a reasonably independent, timely manner.

1. Observation: The candidate must be able to accurately make observations at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision, hearing and sense of touch and is enhanced by the functional use of all of the other senses.
2. Communication: The candidate must be able to communicate effectively, efficiently and sensitively in both oral and written form and be able to perceive nonverbal communication.
3. Motor: Candidates must be able to coordinate both gross and fine muscular movements, maintain equilibrium and have functional use of the senses of hearing, touch and vision. The candidate must possess sufficient postural control, neuromuscular control and eye-to-hand coordination to perform profession-specific skills and tasks.
4. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities: The candidate must be able to problem solve, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, record and synthesize large amounts of information in a timely manner. The candidate must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand spatial relationships.
5. Behavioral and Social Attributes: The candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of the candidate's intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the consistent, prompt completion of all responsibilities, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically, mentally and emotionally taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. The candidate must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, effective interpersonal skills, willingness and ability to function as an effective team player, and interest and motivation to learn are all personal qualities required during the educational process.

Candidates are required to verify the ability to meet these Technical Standards at least 4 weeks prior to matriculation (or if admitted later, within 1 week of deposit). Candidates who may only meet Technical Standards with accommodation, must contact the Office of Student Services to make a formal request for accommodation. The Dean of Students, in consultation with the College Dean/Program Director, will determine what reasonable accommodations can be provided. The College is not able to grant accommodations that alter the educational standards of the curriculum.

Students must meet the Technical Standards for the duration of enrollment at the College. After matriculation, if a student fails to continue to meet the Technical Standards during subsequent enrollment, the student may apply for accommodation by contacting the Office of Student Services. If the accommodation needed to meet the Technical Standards alters the educational standards of the curriculum, the student's ability to satisfactorily progress in the curriculum will be evaluated by the appropriate College's Student Graduation and Promotion Committee.