



# ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

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# Clinically Focused Program

## 4 Year Overview

### YEAR 1

5-6 CLASSES, 20-27 LECTURE & LAB HOURS

ACCELERATED CLINIC PROGRAM  
STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

### YEAR 2

6-7 CLASSES, 19 – 27 LECTURE & LAB HOURS

PATIENT CARE  
EYEWEAR CENTER

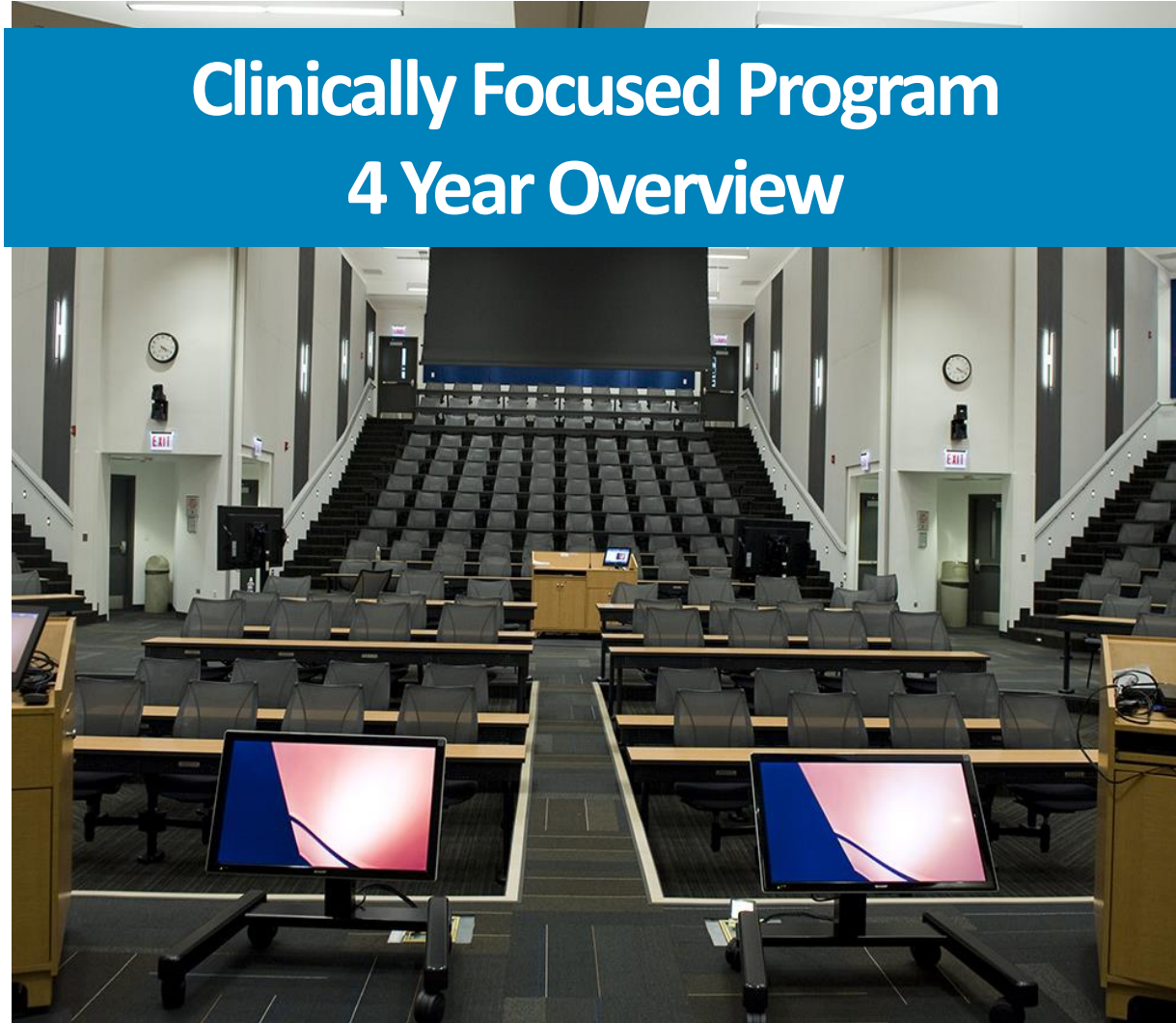
### YEAR 3

4 CLASSES, 20-26 LECTURE & LAB HOURS

EARLY PATIENT CARE EXPERIENCES IN  
ADVANCED OPHTHALMIC CARE,  
CORNEA/CONTACT LENS, AND  
PEDIATRICS-CPS PARTNERSHIP,  
BINOCULAR VISION

### YEAR 4

FOUR EXTERNSHIP ROTATIONS WITH ONE  
IN THE IEI





ICO students have approximately **1,600 patient encounters** by the time they graduate.



## What to do outside classes, labs and clinic?

- ICOLympics
- Quiz Bowl
- Eyeball
- Multicultural Night
- Boo Bash
- Red Cross Blood Drive
- Blindspots





# STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Private Practice Club
- National Optometric Student Association (NOSA)
- American Optometric Student Association (AOSA)
- Student Association
- The Tomb and Key Honor Society
- Canadian Students Association
- SVOSH
- Plus many more...

# SUPPORT SERVICES

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- **Academic**
  - Robust tutoring program
  - Notetaking Service
  - Captured Lectures
  - Counseling
- **Professional**
  - Career Services



# ADMISSIONS PROCESS

REQUIREMENTS

SELF-ASSESSMENT

ICO APPLICATION PROCESS

# DEGREE REQUIRED FOR ACCEPTANCE?

Minimum # of hours required

**90 semester hours**

## **Choosing to Obtain Your Undergraduate Degree**

Although it is possible to enter ICO without an undergraduate degree, keep in mind:

- Earning your degree can make you more competitive
- Additional time for upper-level science coursework
- Over 90% of First Year Students enter the O.D. program with a degree





# UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR

## Choosing Your Undergraduate Major

Biological Sciences	60%
Health Sciences	13%
Psychology/Social Science	7%
Chemistry	8%
Other ( <i>Art, Economics, History, Math, etc.</i> )	5%

(Data from the 2023 Entering Class)

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## Science Coursework

- General Biology w/ lab (6 semester hours/units)
- Microbiology w/ lab (3 semester hours/units)
- Physics w/ lab (6 semester hours/units)
- General Chemistry w/ lab (6 semester hours/units)
- Organic Chemistry (3 semester hours/units)

*Note: Related lab required for all courses except organic chemistry.*

## General Coursework

- English (6 semester hours/units)
- Calculus (3 semester hours/units)
- Statistics (3 semester hours/units)
- Psychology (3 semester hours/units)
- Social Science (3 semester hours/units)

# OTHER GREAT COURSES

- Additional upper-level human/animal based biological sciences (i.e., Anatomy, Physiology)
- Psychology
- Public Speaking
- Business, Management, Finance



# INSIDER INFORMATION ABOUT GPA

## GPA is more than a number

- We review 'Overall' and 'Science' GPA
- 3.0 or above in both GPA categories are considered average
- Course loads
- Grade trends over time (steady, upward, declining)
- Are there D's F's and/or W's?

# STANDARDIZED TEST

**ICO now accepts both the OAT and the GRE!**

- Register for the OAT online – [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)
- Register for the GRE online – [https://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/register](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register)

## **Exam Facts and Tips**

- Last date to take the OAT or GRE for next entering class is closing date for applications for ICO May 1st
- Carefully strategize whether to the OAT or GRE based on your academic history
- Most successful candidates take the OAT or GRE the summer they plan to apply
- 60-day wait to repeat the OAT (special permission needed after 3 attempts)
- 21-day wait to repeat the GRE (5 attempts per calendar year)

# SCORING GOALS AND TIPS

## GRE

- Verbal and Quantitative Reasonings sections are scored on a 130-170 scale (1 pt. increments); Analytical Writing 0-6 in half pt. increments
- Scoring in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in each section is considered the average

## OAT

Scored on a scale of 200 – 400 (increments of 10)

Score of 300 in each section is considered the average

- Do timed practice tests (At least 3x)
- Research popular free or cost-effective test prep materials (Kaplan, OAT Destroyer, Chad's Videos)
- Optimize your test day experience (good night's rest, eat breakfast, arrive to testing site on-time)



# QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES

Numbers are important to get your foot in the door...

***BUT***

...Numbers alone do not indicate whether you will make a good doctor!

# REFLECT UPON THE 'BEST DOCTOR YOU KNOW'

## Communication skills are extremely important

Optometry is highly interactive

- Look for opportunities to work with lots of different people and varying personalities

Good optometrists/doctors are good communicators!

- Consider your own life experiences





# GAIN MORE EXPOSURE TO THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY

- **Knowledge of optometry**
  - Explore optometry related websites
  - Explore optometry related programs (i.e. ICO's Focus on Your Future)
- **Seek out opportunities to shadow an O.D.**
  - Varying modes of practice (at least two)
  - Ask about optometry school experience
  - Ask a lot of questions



## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES CAN MAKE YOU QUALITATIVELY STRONGER...

- Leadership opportunities within clubs/student organizations
- Community Service
- Work



Tip...Avoid extracurricular overload

# INTERVIEW TIP: KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES



- In what areas do you excel?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why optometry?
- Why ICO?

# SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

## Centralized Application for OptomCAS:

- ✓ Complete the online, centralized application to OptomCAS
  - Submit a one-page autobiographical statement to OptomCAS
  - Send official transcripts from all institutions attended to OptomCAS
  - Two Letters of Evaluation to OptomCAS (up to four)
    - (1) Optometrist Letter
    - (2) Academic Letter
  - Pay application fee to OptomCAS

**We do not have a supplemental application**

A group of students in a laboratory setting, looking at a piece of equipment. The image is overlaid with a light blue tint. A vertical blue line is on the left side of the page.

# INTERVIEW DAY

- **Student Success Presentation**
- **Financial Aid Presentation**
- **Career Development Presentation**
- **Tour/Lunch with Current Students**  
(In – person only)
- **One-on-one Interview**

*Admissions Committee decisions are sent by e-mail in approximately two weeks from the date of the interview!*

# FOLLOW US SOCIAL MEDIA AT ICO

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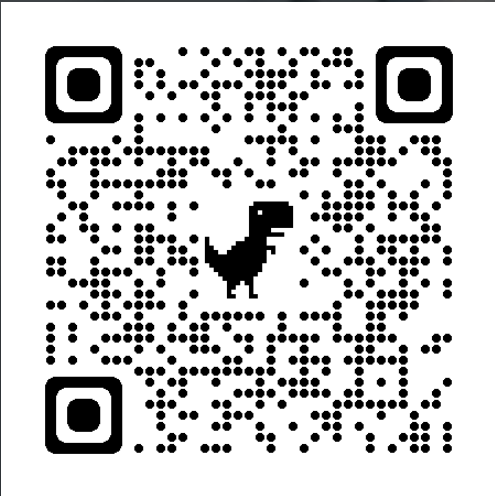


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I'M HERE TO  
HELP!



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Other Resources:

<https://www.why.ico.edu/>