

CAREER OF THE WEEK: Optometrist

What does an optometrist do?

Optometrists deal with patients' eyes and can make a big difference to a person's life. They are trained to test vision; recognise eyesight defects or abnormalities, eye diseases such as glaucoma and cataracts, and serious health conditions such as diabetes, brain tumours or high blood pressure; prescribe glasses and fit contact lenses. They use their skills and experience to improve patients' eyesight and can deal with a wide range of patients, from young children to the elderly. Optometrists can work at an opticians' store, in an NHS or private hospital, at a GP practice or in a laboratory.



What can I expect to earn as an optometrist?

As a trainee optometrist working for the NHS in a hospital, you will be paid on the [Agenda for Change \(AFC\) pay system](#), typically starting on band 4, with salaries currently ranging from £27,485 to £30,162. As a qualified and registered optometrist, you would start on band 6 (£38,682 to £46,580). With further training, education and experience, you could apply for more senior posts such as specialist optometrist at band 7 (£47,810 to £54,710) or principal optometrist at bands 8a-8b (£55,690 to £74,896). As a consultant optometrist or head of service, you could be on band 8c (£76,965 to £88,682).

Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside the NHS. The starting salary for a newly qualified optometrist in a high street business is typically around £30,000 - £35,000 per annum.

What subjects should I study to become an optometrist?

You will usually need 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent, including English, maths and science and 3 A levels, or equivalent, including at least 1 science.

How can I start my career as an optometrist?

First you will need to complete a General Optical Council (GOC) approved undergraduate degree or an integrated four years' master's degree in optometry. Details of the universities that offer optometrist courses can be found at <https://optical.org/en/education-and-cpd/education/what-to-study-and-where/>. You will then need to complete a one-year pre-registration placement, with a registered optometrist. Lastly, you will need to complete a final assessment to qualify and register as an optometrist with the General Optical Council.

To research local education and training opportunities that could lead to a career as an optometrist, visit our partner website www.logonmoveon.co.uk

Useful websites to find out more about a career as an optometrist:

A career in optometry <https://www.college-optometrists.org/qualifying/a-career-in-optometry>
Health Careers - Optometrist <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/optometrist/optometrist>
A career in optics <https://optical.org/en/education-and-cpd/education/a-career-in-optics/>
Association of Optometrists <https://www.aop.org.uk/>
National Careers Service – Optometrist <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/optometrist>
What is an Optometrist? https://youtu.be/UAm8HDMK_es
College of Optometrists, Scheme for Registration <https://www.college-optometrists.org/qualifying/scheme-for-registration>



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