

# VISION



Individuals working in this field are involved in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of eye diseases and disorders. They prescribe and administer corrective lenses, medications, and exercises to improve overall patient health.

## **Careers within this section include:**

Ophthalmic Assistant/Technician/Technologist

Optician

Optometric Assistant/Technician (Paraoptometrics)

Optometrist



## **Ophthalmic Assistant/ Technician/Technologist**

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### **What would I do?**

Ophthalmic Assistants, Technicians and Technologists perform procedures under the supervision of an Ophthalmologist (a medically trained eye doctor). These professionals are part of an eye care team who supply important information to the medical doctor treating the patient. Some of the duties performed by ophthalmic health professionals include, but are not limited to, taking patient histories, providing patient services, taking eye measurements, administering diagnostic tests and eye evaluations, maintaining ophthalmic instruments, and performing a variety of clinical skills.

### **Where would I work?**

Ophthalmic Assistants, Technicians and Technologists are employed by Ophthalmologists in private practice, clinics, or hospitals.

### **What would I earn?**

\$18,000–50,000

### **What do I need to know?**

Ophthalmic health personnel may have on-the-job training while working in an ophthalmic office setting. They may also obtain and complete an independent study course and, after one year, pass a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) exam. After another year, an individual is eligible to take an exam to become a Certified Ophthalmic Technician (COT). After three years in the field, that individual is eligible to take an exam to become a Certified Ophthalmic Technologist (COMT). The other option is to complete an Ophthalmic Training Program, pass an exam, and then begin to work in an ophthalmic office setting.

Certification is available for all three levels of personnel and may be obtained from the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO).

### **What schools can I attend?**

At the current time there are no academic institutions in New Hampshire offering a program for Ophthalmic Assistants, Technicians or Technologists. In the past, New Hampshire students have attended out-of-state schools such as Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, MA. In addition, the American Academy of Ophthalmology offers an independent study course for Ophthalmic Assistants. For further details, contact the academy (see below).

### **Where can I find more information?**

American Academy of Ophthalmology  
PO Box 7424  
San Francisco, CA 94120-7424  
(415) 561-8500  
[www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org)

Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology  
2025 Woodlane Drive  
Woodbury, MN 55125-2998  
(800) 482-4858  
[www.atpo.org](http://www.atpo.org)

Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel  
in Ophthalmology  
2025 Woodlane Drive  
Woodbury, MN 55125-2998  
(651) 731-2944  
(800) 284-3937  
[www.jcahpo.org](http://www.jcahpo.org)

## **Optician**

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### **What would I do?**

Opticians interpret the prescriptions that Optometrists and Ophthalmologists prescribe, and design either eyeglasses or contact lenses that best fulfill the patient's needs. They do not examine patients, but do help patients select their eyeglasses or contact lenses and fit them accordingly. They also repair and adjust glasses for patients.

### **Where would I work?**

Opticians may own their own businesses, work for optometrists or ophthalmologists, or work for retail chain stores.

### **What would I earn?**

\$20,000–42,000

### **What do I need to know?**

Opticians complete either a two-year associate's degree program or a three-year apprenticeship under the supervision of a Licensed Optician.

### **What schools can I attend?**

At the current time there are no academic institutions in New Hampshire offering a program for Opticians. In the past, New Hampshire students have attended out-of-state schools such as Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, MA.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Commission on Opticianry Accreditation  
PO Box 4342  
Chapel Hill, NC 27515  
(703) 468-0566  
[www.coaccreditation.com](http://www.coaccreditation.com)

National Academy of Opticianry  
8401 Corporate Drive, Suite 605  
Landover, MD 20785  
(301) 577-4828  
(800) 229-4828  
[www.nao.org](http://www.nao.org)

Opticians Association of America  
441 Carlisle Drive  
Herndon, VA 20170  
(703) 437-8780  
(800) 443-8997  
[www.oaa.org](http://www.oaa.org)

## **Optometric Assistant/Technician (Paraoptometrics)**

### **What would I do?**

Optometric Assistants/Technicians (also called Paraoptometrics) assist Optometrists by performing a variety of tasks as part of the vision care team. There are three levels of paraoptometrics. Certified Paraoptometrics (CPOs) carry out front desk procedures, including scheduling appointments, recalling patients, handling insurance forms and accepting payments.

They may also be trained in frame repair and adjusting. Certified Paraoptometric Assistants (CPOAs) work under the supervision of an Optometrist and perform technical duties such as taking patient histories measuring the pupils and performing glaucoma screening and blood pressure testing. Certified Paraoptometric Technicians (CPOTs) are responsible for the same duties as a CPOA, as well as ordering prescription eyewear, modifying contact lenses and supervising vision therapy.

### **Where would I work?**

Most Optometric Assistants/Technicians or Paraoptometrics work in Optometrists' offices.

### **What would I earn?**

\$15,000–25,000

### **What do I need to know?**

Optometric Assistants/Technicians or Paraoptometrics may be trained on the job or they may complete a formal certificate program. They may also design an associate's degree program following high school graduation.

### **What schools can I attend?**

At the present time there are no academic institutions in New Hampshire offering a degree in Optometric Assistants/Technicians or Paraoptometrics. The American Optometric Association (AOA) offers a Paraoptometric Certification Program for Paraoptometrics. For further details, contact the association (see below).

### **Where can I find more information?**

American Optometric Association  
Paraoptometric Section  
243 North Lindbergh Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63141  
(314) 991-4100  
[www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org)



## Optometrist

### What would I do?

Optometrists (Doctors of Optometry) examine, diagnose, treat, and manage disease and disorders of the visual systems and eye. By prescribing glasses or contact lenses, they are able to correct vision problems. Also, they provide pre- and post-operative care to patients undergoing cataract and other eye surgeries.

### Where would I work?

Most Optometrists are self-employed, operating their own business. Others work for universities, hospitals or group practices.

### What would I earn?

\$84,000–166,000

### What do I need to know?

Optometrists must complete either 90 semester credits of college including science prerequisites, or a bachelor's degree. They then attend a four-year program at an accredited optometry school. After completion of the educational requirements, Optometrists must pass a written and clinical state board examination. Optometrists must renew their license every one to three years and complete continuing education credits.

### What schools can I attend?

At the current time there are no academic institutions in New Hampshire offering a program for Optometrists. In the past, New Hampshire students

have attended out-of-state schools such as The New England College of Optometry in Boston, MA.

### Where can I find more information?

American Academy of Optometry  
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 506  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 984-1441  
[www.aaopt.org](http://www.aaopt.org)

American Optometric Association  
1505 Prince Street, Suite 300  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(800) 365-2219  
[www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org)

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 510  
Rockville, MD 20852  
(301) 231-5944  
[www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)

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