

## **SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY POLICY**

**Date Revised:** 11/3/2025

**Responsible Party:** Department of Optometry and Vision Science

**Contact(s):** Elizabeth Steele, OD, FAAO, Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs

---

## **Optometry Core Competencies for Entry-Level Optometrists**

One of the fundamental goals of the UAB School of Optometry is to identify, train and cultivate highly competent and ethical Doctors of Optometry who possess the foundational knowledge, clinical skills, and commitment to patient care necessary to excel in the evolving field of optometry.

Entry-level optometrists must be capable of independent evidence-based clinical practice of optometry as the primary healthcare practitioner of the eye and visual system who provides comprehensive eye and vision care. Graduating students must have shown proficiency in areas of contemporary optometric practice including evaluation/diagnosis and treatment/management of refractive conditions, diseases of the eye and associated systems, and rehabilitation, normalization, and enhancement of the visual system. The goals and competencies listed below will be modified periodically to meet the evolving needs of the profession and ensure that the students are educated to meet the standards to practice procedures which are allowable in at least 10% of states' scope of practice. The UABSO curriculum will reflect the frequency and criticality of the conditions that the optometrist will encounter and will evolve as the scope of optometric practice evolves. This information can be found within the UABSO Curriculum Tracks within the UABSO Curriculum List.

By the time of graduation, students must be able to:

- I. Demonstrate basic life support skills for emergencies encountered in independent optometric practice**
  - a. Maintain CPR certification throughout clinical program
  - b. Demonstrate proficiency in emergency simulation activities in applicable coursework
  - c. Recognition of, and use of appropriate management for, medical emergencies in patient care situations as they arise within clinical coursework
- II. Identify, record, and analyze pertinent history and problems presented by the patient**
  - a. Demonstrate proficiency in the skill of taking, documenting and analyzing a patient history in didactic coursework
  - b. Obtain and effectively document and utilize patient history in patient care within clinical coursework
- III. Examine and evaluate the patient to arrive at an appropriate diagnosis**
  - a. Demonstrate proficiency in clinical skills necessary for accurate data collection in didactic coursework
  - b. Demonstrate and effectively utilize knowledge, clinical integration and other clinical skills in patient care situations within clinical coursework for appropriate diagnosis of vision and ocular conditions

**IV. Formulate a rational treatment and management plan and understand the implications of various treatment and management options**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in clinical decision making in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate the ability to formulate treatment and management of vision and ocular conditions; demonstrate effective clinical decision-making in patient care within clinical coursework for vision and ocular conditions

**V. Provide relevant patient education and counseling**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in patient education and counseling in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate relevant patient education and counseling in patient care within clinical coursework for vision and ocular conditions

**VI. Use the knowledge of optometry's role and the roles of other health professions to appropriately assess and address the health care needs of individual patients and the public health aspects related to the populations being served**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in the care of systemic conditions in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate and effectively utilize knowledge of systemic conditions

**VII. Apply knowledge of interprofessional collaborative care, ethics, and medico-legal aspects for the delivery of optometric care.**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in knowledge of interprofessional collaborative care, ethics, and medico-legal aspects for the delivery of optometric care in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate and effectively utilize knowledge of interprofessional collaborative care, ethics, and medico-legal aspects for the delivery of optometric care in-patient care within clinical coursework for vision and ocular conditions

**VIII. Demonstrate an understanding of research principles and conduct to critically assess the literature**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in research principles, literature assessment, and evidence-based medicine in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate and effectively utilize research principles, literature assessment, and evidence-based medicine in patient care within clinical coursework for vision and ocular conditions.

**IX. Demonstrate effective and culturally sensitive communications, both oral and written, with other professionals and patients and people in the community**

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in communication in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate and effectively communicate in patient care within clinical coursework (e.g. 3rd year observation, Primary Care and other rotations), for vision and ocular conditions

**X. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and philosophy of optometric practice management**

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of practice management in didactic coursework
- b. Demonstrate understanding and proficiency, and effectively communicate to patients, optometric practice management concepts (e.g. billing and coding, insurance, third party payors, optical and contact lens material management).

# **UAB Optometry**

For each of the above competencies, applicable didactic and clinical course metrics and evaluation tools for determining proficiency are as follows. These courses are outlined within the UABSO Curricular tracks within the UABSO Curriculum.

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Key Assessment tools:</b>
Didactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course exams and other assessments evaluate proficiency in applicable competencies</li><li>• Grading rubrics for exams and lab practicals and other assessments evaluate hands-on ability in applicable competencies</li></ul>
Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grading rubrics in Meditrek standardize expectations in clinical courses.</li><li>• Clinical training and observation tools as defined by clinical course syllabi are additional assessment measures (e.g. Clinical Proficiency Exam, 3<sup>rd</sup> year patient observation).</li></ul>