NAIT/OAC Optical Sciences - Eyeglasses

The Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Program is produced by the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and is administered by the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC). This program is offered in English or French.

The Optical Sciences Programs will give those already employed in the optical industry the skills required of a Licensed Optician in Canada. The NAIT/OAC Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Program is a 4-semester training program. Each semester is approximately 3-months in length. The NAIT/OAC Contact Lenses Program is an additional 2-semester training program.

In the Eyeglasses Diploma Program, theory courses taken online are complemented by 2,000 hours of clinical practicum, directly supervised by a qualified preceptor in the workplace. **Therefore, applicants of this program must already be working in the optical industry.** *It is suggested that students are working approximately 38 or more hours per week to be able to complete the clinical hours in the required timeframe.*

Career Options

Grads work as registered Opticians in retail dispensaries, low vision practices, refractive surgery clinics, and contact lens specialty practices. You can also go on to obtain advanced practice certification in contact lenses.

Accreditation & Industry Certification

Please Note: Completion of the NAIT/OAC Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Program may not necessarily enable an individual to apply for licensing outside of Canada. This program follows the competencies outlined for Opticians in Canada.

The NAIT Optical Sciences Programs are accredited by Accreditation Canada https://accreditation.ca/

Licensing in Canada: Completion of this program is one of the steps towards registration as a Licensed Optician in Canada. Students must meet all registration requirements of the Provincial Regulatory Board of the Canadian province they wish to become licensed in.

For further information on registration as an Optician in a Canadian province, go to How to Become An Optician | Become an Optician

Quick Facts

Credential: Diploma
Length: 4-semesters (3 mths/semester)

Intakes: Fall, Winter
Location: Not applicable

Application Deadlines

Fall 2025 Intake (August 28 start) – Application period: June 1 to August 5
This intake runs courses for Eyeglass Semester One and Semester Three.

Winter 2026 Intake (January 3 start) – Application period: October 15 to December 1
This intake runs courses for Eyeglass Semester One, Semester Two and Semester Four.

Spring 2026 Intake (May 1 start) – Application period: April 1 to April 20
This intake runs courses for Eyeglass Semester Two as well as limited Semester Three & Four courses. This intake is for existing students only.

Admission Requirements

Academic Requirements

- **CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL DILOMA OR ASSESSED EQUIVALENT**
  Applicants must submit documentation as proof of this requirement. It is recommended that applicants have a strong background in mathematics, with knowledge of geometry and trigonometry.

  Canadian High School Graduates are asked to submit an official transcript of marks. Official transcripts are original academic documents bearing the official seal, stamp and/or signature of the issuing institution or agency. **Transcripts must include date of graduation.**

  To order your Canadian High School Transcript, please visit the following website:
  Get High School Transcripts - alis (alberta.ca)
  Click on the province you graduated from for further instructions. *(Please indicate on your transcript request that the original transcript be mailed to your HOME ADDRESS and NOT to the OAC or NAIT)*

  IMPORTANT TO NOTE: If you are unable to submit proof of a Canadian Highschool Diploma or Assessed Equivalent, you may still be considered for enrollment through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Admissions Pathway if you have work experience in the related field. This pathway will include providing documentation to support work experience, analytical skills,

  customer service skills, communication skills and computer skills. For further information, please contact us at **education@opticians.ca**

- **PROOF OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP)** You can meet the ELP requirement for NAIT/OAC in one of the following ways:

  1. **Complete consecutive, full-time studies in English** – you meet this requirement if you have completed at least 3 years of high school (or combination of high school and post-secondary) in Canada or in a country on NAIT's ELP exempt country list – including completion of Grade 12 English; or you have completed at least 2 years of post-secondary education in Canada or an ELP exempt country. Your studies must have been in English, full-time, and consecutive. **CLICK HERE TO VIEW NAITs ELP EXEMPT COUNTRY LIST**

2. **Complete specific English language courses** Achieve acceptable marks in an approved English language course(s). **CLICK HERE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

3. **Take an ELP Test -** NAIT accepts certain ELP assessment tests and scores. ELP test results are only valid for two years from the test date. **CLICK HERE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Non-Academic Requirements

- **WORKING IN AN OPTICAL DISPENSARY WITH A QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR**
  Applicants must already be working in an optical dispensary and have an approved qualified preceptor/supervisor willing to supervise the clinical (practical) component of the program. The preceptor must be a registered, practicing Optician or Optometrist. A preceptor is required to apply to be an approved NAIT preceptor with the OAC prior to a student applying for enrollment (further information can be found in the Application Process document). The OAC and NAIT allow a preceptor to supervise a maximum of two (2) students at a time. The OAC and NAIT allow a student to have a maximum of two (2) preceptors. Additional requests must be approved by the OAC. Preceptors must abide by and follow the policies and guidelines as outlined by their Provincial Regulatory College as it pertains to supervision of a student, if applicable. Please ensure that your preceptor has checked with their Provincial Regulatory College to ensure they understand and meet the policies and/or requirements of your province, if applicable.

Tuition & Fees (subject to change)

The cost per credit for tuition for **2025/2026 is $340.00** for International students.

The fees below outline enrollment in all courses for a particular **Semester for Winter 2025 & Spring 2025** intakes (if you are not enrolling in a full semester of courses, contact education@opticians.ca for tuition fees):

Eyeglasses Year One

Semester One: ***$5220.00*** *($5100.00 tuition + $120.00 ancillary fees)*
Semester Two: ***$5220.00*** *($5100.00 tuition + $120.00 ancillary fees)*

Eyeglasses Year Two

Semester Three: ***$5220.00*** *($5100.00 tuition + $120.00 ancillary fees)*
Semester Four: ***$5220.00*** *($5100.00 tuition + $120.00 ancillary fees)*

Tuition does not include applicable application fees, textbooks, workshop fees and supplies that may be recommended or required.

Textbooks & Supplies (estimate)

Eyeglasses Year One: $400 Eyeglasses Year Two: $200

**Please refer to Textbook & Supplies found under About the Program in this document*

How to Apply

Students outside of the province of Alberta and Territories register directly through the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC); **DO NOT** register through APAS on the NAIT website. Please refer to the **'Application Process'** document for information on how to apply.

APPLICATION FEE: To apply for the Optical Sciences Programs, there is a non-refundable application fee of $50 + GST (subject to change). This fee applies to first time Year One applicants only and is due prior to applying.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS: Some NAIT programs are unavailable to international students because they do not meet eligibility for a study permit or Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP).

- **Study Permit:** This program is delivered through distance learning and therefore does not meet the criteria for a study permit.
- **Co-Op:** Due to this program not meeting the criteria of a study permit, it also does not meet the criteria for a Co-Op Work Permit.
- **Post-Graduation Work Permit:** This program is delivered through distance learning and therefore is not eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Program. Completion of this program will not make you eligible for a PGWP.

International students who have questions about permissions to take this program can **contact** a NAIT Academic Advisor – International to discuss options.

Advanced Credit

You may apply for advanced credit once you have been accepted into the program. Advanced Credit can be Transfer Credit (for completed post-secondary courses), Credential Recognition (for completed certificates, diplomas or degrees) or PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition). Advanced credit requirements that are applied to each request include: You must have completed the course or program no more than two (2) years ago and must have a minimum mark of C- in the course(s) or program. Additional requirements may apply.

About the Program

Opticianry is a growing industry that involves the fitting and supplying of eyeglasses. The skillful preparation and fitting of corrective lenses is vitally important to the customer's health, so people entering this field require rigorous training and education. The work is retail-oriented, so anyone considering this as a career must have great communication skills as well as a flexible schedule.

The Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Diploma is an independent study program consisting of four semesters. Depending on when a student enrolls, completion of the full program can take anywhere from 16 – 20 months*. Each semester requires completion of theoretical courses and clinical (practicum) courses. The

clinical courses consist of on-the-job training similar in nature to an apprenticeship – students perfect their skills under the supervision of a qualified preceptor at their place of employment.
**This time frame will be extended if a student is unsuccessful in passing courses throughout the program.*

Distance Learning

In order to provide maximum flexibility to complete your courses on evenings and weekends, we have designed this program to be taken online. The program, including course material and assessments, is accessible through Brightspace, NAIT's online eLearning system. This method of delivery allows you to participate in course forums and access learning materials whenever you want, from the comfort of your own home, office, or local coffee shop.

The program contains online learning guided by an online instructor. Sstudent's participate in online discussions, can view and print class notes, and apply theory through hands-on exercises and quizzes. Students also complete an online final examination at the end of each semester.

The average study time required to spend each week on the course is approximately 12 hours; however, the time required to master the content will vary with each individual. This time DOES NOT include Clinical work.

Technology Requirements

A reliable high-speed internet connection is required to connect to the online course content.
To use Brightspace, any current and supported operating system and web browser will work, however Mozilla and Chrome are preferred.

If using an iPad or tablet instead of a laptop or desktop computer, be aware that older and non-supported devices may not work in the program. A student-facing web camera either as part of the device or as a plug-in external device is required for tests and exams.

The Optical Sciences Programs use Respondus and Lockdown browser for tests and exams. Please review the computer requirements listed for the lockdown browser:

- What are the computer requirements for installations of Respondus LockDown Browser? – Respondus Support

Textbook & Supplies

Tuition does not include the cost of textbooks(s) and supplies. It is the responsibility of the student to purchase the textbook(s) and supplies in time for course commencement.

Please consult the textbook & supply list by clicking on this link: **TEXTBOOK & SUPPLY LIST**
Students can purchase textbooks and supplies through the NAIT Bookstore (https://shop.nait.ca), or an alternate source.

Semester Final Examinations

Final semester examinations are completed online. You will complete an examination for each theory course you are enrolled in. There will be a scheduled date and start time for the final semester examinations. Final semester examinations will take place at the beginning of December for Fall intake, beginning of April for Winter intake and end of July for Spring intake. **Examinations MUST be taken on the scheduled day at the scheduled time.** You will receive more information about final examinations in the Student Handbook.

Clinical (Practicum) Courses/Work Experience

A student is required to complete a clinical course in each semester of the Program. Through the clinical courses, students gain practical experience by working with patients and equipment under direct supervision of a qualified and approved preceptor. Each clinical course requires 500 supervised dispensing hours to be documented and signed off by the preceptor. The 500 dispensing hours per clinical course are due at the end of each semester. Over the 4-semester program a student will complete 2000 practical hours (1000 in Year One and 1000 in Year Two). There is also an accompanying clinical manual to be completed for each clinical course. NAIT and the OAC allow a student to have a maximum of two (2) preceptors unless a request for more is approved by the OAC. NAIT and the OAC allow a preceptor to supervise a maximum of two (2) students at one time.

It is important that you and your preceptor(s) understand the role they will play in your clinical courses before they agree to act in this role. **Click to learn more about the: CLINICAL COURSES AND THE ROLE OF A PRECEPTOR** *(Please print this off and provide a copy to your preceptor)*

Completion Requirements

To obtain a NAIT Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Diploma, students must successfully complete:

- 12 online theory courses with a minimum overall passing grade of 63% in each course.
- 4 clinical practicum courses of 500 dispensing hours each, under the direct supervision of a qualified and approved preceptor. The 500 hours are due at the end of each semester, along with a clinical manual. ***The time frame to complete a clinical practicum is approximately 3 months, which translates to approximately 38 hours of supervised work per week.***

Required Courses

Here is the list of required courses that must be taken to successfully complete your program.

Term 1

OPSC1111 Communication - 3.0 credits

Opticians must effectively communicate with patients, co-workers, and other health professionals. Students in the Communications course discuss and apply key concepts of the varying communication styles. Students will learn appropriate terminology and collaboration, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills to deliver the best patient-centered care.

OPEG1112 Frames – 3.0 credits

Opticians need to know how to select proper eyewear frames based on patients' needs and preferences. Students in the Frames course learn how to identify the various frame properties, determine frame suitability, and properly recognize and adjust misaligned frames to produce the desired effect for display or on a patient.

OPEG1211 Instruments and Measurements - 3.0 credits

Patients rely on Opticians to obtain accurate anatomical and lens measurements to ensure the chosen lenses are successful. Students in Instruments and Measurements learn how to use equipment such as lensmeters, lensclocks, calipers, and distometers to measure lens properties, determine lens power, and compile and evaluate patient measurements for single vision, multifocal, and progressive lenses.

OPEG1191 Clinical I: Eyeglasses - 6.0 credits

Students will apply academic learning in a workplace setting under the supervision of their preceptor(s). Students will apply and practice theoretical knowledge of communication with patients, and other health professionals. They will recognize and correct frame misalignments on a patient as well as for standard alignment. Students will demonstrate the ability of to determine frame suitability and obtain measurements of a lens and patient with the use of appropriate tools. 500 dispensing practical hours are required as part of this Clinical.

Term 2

OPSC1113 Foundational Optics - 3.0 credits

Knowing the foundations of optics; the study of light, and how it behaves as it transmits through various mediums is beneficial for opticians to better understand how lenses work. Students in Foundational Optics discuss theories of light and will learn to solve problems using basic mathematical skills, formulas, and equations. Optical formulas will be used to determine what influences the path of light and power of a lens when certain factors such as lens position, lens surface curvature, and prism are altered.

OPEG1114 Ophthalmic Prescriptions and Lens Design - 3.0 credits

Opticians need to know the different types of lenses available to select the correct type of lens to fulfill a patient's needs. Students in Ophthalmic Prescriptions and Lens Design will analyze prescriptions, examine the properties of varying lens types, and determine how they relate to an individual's vision considerations for sports, safety, outdoors, and/or indoor use of vision aide appliances.

OPEG2115 Selecting and Troubleshooting Lenses and Frames - 3.0 credits

Opticians are equipped to select, analyze, and troubleshoot a variety of lenses and frames to provide successful optical appliances to patients. Students in Selecting and Troubleshooting Lenses and Frames course examine patient profiles and prescriptions related to determining the proper selection of frames and lenses. Students will learn how to calculate lens power at any meridian, prismatic effect of a decentered lens, compare lens properties to the standards of the ophthalmic dispensing industry, and provide solutions for patients.

OPEG2192 Clinical II: Eyeglasses - 6.0 credits

Student opticians will apply academic learning in a workplace setting under the supervision of their preceptor(s). Students will apply theoretical knowledge of compiling measurements, selecting appropriate lenses and frames, and counselling patients on the use of various optical devices. Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize and and solve common issues with prescription eyeglasses. 500 dispensing practical hours are required as part of this Clinical.

Term 3

OPEG1311 Eye Health – 3.0 credits

Opticians must possess knowledge about the eye and its health. Students in the Eye Health course learn about anatomy and physiology of the eye and ocular pathologies. Refractive errors and surgical alternatives are discussed. Students examine various systemic diseases and pharmaceuticals and how they affect the eye and vision

OPEG2215 Advanced Optics – 3.0 credits

Many factors determine how an eyeglass prescription will perform for a patient. Students in the Advanced Optics course calculate how lens power is affected by lens position and frame measurements. The effects of multifocal lenses and how prism affects multifocal and progressive lenses measurements are analyzed and calculated.

OPSC2212 Ethics and Standards of Practice - 3.0 credits

As a student optician, you will apply the code of ethics, standards of practice and implement occupational health and safety procedures to ensure a high standard of practice.

OPEG2293 Clinical III: Eyeglasses - 6.0 credits

Student opticians apply academic learning in a workplace setting under the supervision of their preceptor. Students provide an optical appliance for a patient by compiling, analyzing and interpreting data and then verify this appliance by using tools, measurements and calculations. Students assess ocular health and counsel patients within their scope of practice while modelling ethical behaviour. 500 dispensing practical hours are required as part of this Clinical.

Term 4

OPEG2211 Refraction – 3.0 credits

Students learn to complete patient histories and explain vision screening test and refraction results.

OPEG2214 Analysis and Interpretation of Visual Aids - 3.0 credits

Patients with low vision have special unique visual needs. Students in this course learn to assess these needs, provide appropriate devices, recognize issues with these devices and provide solutions. Students also learn about the process of lens edging and finishing.

OPEG2213 Management for Opticians - 3.0 credits

As a student optician, you will use general business system concepts, structure, organization, management principles, and financial accounting systems in the day-to-day operation of the optical dispensary.

OPEG3294 Clinical IV: Eyeglasses - 6.0 credits

Students opticians apply academic learning in a workplace setting under the supervision of their preceptor. Students provide an optical appliance for a patient by compiling, analyzing and interpreting data and then verify this appliance by using tools, measurements and calculations. Students assess ocular health and counsel patients within their scope of practice while modelling ethical behavior. 500 dispensing practical hours are required as part of this Clinical.