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) to students residing outside of Alberta and Territories. This program is offered in English and French.

The Optical Sciences Programs will give those already employed in the optical industry the skills required of a Licensed Optician. The NAIT Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Program is a 2-year, full-time training program. The program is split into 4 semesters; each semester is approximately 3-months in length. The NAIT 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 certificate in contact lenses.

Accreditation & Industry Certification

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

Completion of this program is **one of the steps** towards registration as an Optician in PEI. The next step is to successfully pass the NACOR Optical Sciences Eyeglasses Examination. For more information on the NACOR exams, go to www.nacor.ca.

Students must meet all registration requirements of the PEI Board of Dispensing Opticians (PEIBDO). For further information on registration as an Optician in PEI, contact the PEIBDO.

Quick Facts

Credential: Diploma

Length: 4-semesters (3 mths/semester)

Intakes: Fall, Winter

Location: Not applicable

Application Deadlines

Fall 2026 Intake (September 1 start) – Application period: June 1 to August 5
This intake runs courses for Eyeglass Semester One and Semester Three.

Winter 2027 Intake (January 7 start) – Application period: October 15 to December 1
This intake runs courses for Eyeglass Semester One, Semester Two and Semester Four.

Spring 2027 Intake (May 3 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.

Depending on the intake that a student enrolls, completion of the full program can take anywhere from 16 – 20 months*.
**This time frame will be extended if a student is unsuccessful in passing courses throughout the program.*

Admission Requirements (Minimum entrance requirements)

Academic Requirements

- **CANADIAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR ASSESSED EQUIVALENT**
  Applicants must submit documentation as proof of this requirement. It is highly 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.** If you are unable to submit an official transcript from high school and were enrolled in post-secondary education in Canada, we will accept a copy of your post-secondary transcript.

  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, post-secondary education in Canada 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 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 AN APPROVED, 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, although an Optician is preferred. 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.

PLEASE NOTE: For preceptors in PEI, the Regulatory College in PEI (Prince Edward Island Board of Dispensing Opticians - PEIBDO) requires that you are licensed for a minimum of one (1) year prior to being eligible to supervise a student and you are limited to the number of students you can supervise at one time. For more information, contact alanjoseph@bellaliant.net or acseamus@gmail.com

Tuition & Fees (subject to change)

The cost per credit for tuition for 2026/2027 is $136.00

The fees below outline enrollment in all courses for a particular Semester for Fall 2026, Winter 2027 & Spring 2027 intakes (if you are not enrolling in a full semester of courses, contact education@opticians.ca for tuition fees):

Eyeglasses Year One
- Semester One: **$2185.00** ($2040.00 tuition + $145.00 ancillary fees)
- Semester Two: **$2185.00** ($2040.00 tuition + $145.00 ancillary fees)

Eyeglasses Year Two
- Semester Three: **$2185.00** ($2040.00 tuition + $145.00 ancillary fees)
- Semester Four: **$2185.00** ($2040.00 tuition + $145.00 ancillary fees)

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

**International designation refers to students who do not have the status of Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada*

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 **'Application Process'** on the **OAC – NAIT Programs site** for information on how to apply.

APPLICATION FEE: To apply for the Optical Sciences Programs, there is a non-refundable program 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: This program is not available to international students residing within Canada. This program is only available in Canada to individuals who hold the status of Canadian Citizen or Permanent Resident of Canada.

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) 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.
- You must have a minimum mark of C- in the course(s) or program.
- Additional requirements may apply.

About the Program

NAITs two-year Optical Sciences Eyeglasses program combines online theory with workplace-based practicum, where you'll gain hands-on experience under the guidance of a qualified preceptor at your place of employment, similar to an apprenticeship. Each semester of the program requires completion of theory courses and a clinical (practicum) course.

You will learn all the necessary skills to help patients get the right pair of eyeglasses. This includes frame selection, lens selection, taking accurate measurements, placing the order, verifying when the glasses return, adjusting the frame for the patient, troubleshooting any issues that arise if the patient returns with concerns.

Learning outcomes in the program include:

- Utilize ocular equipment to compile measurements for eyeglass lenses and frames.
- Apply measurements, customer preference, and ocular best practices to finalize eyeglass appliances and low vision devices.

- Demonstrate professional conduct in alignment with legislation, standards of practice, and workplace expectations.
- Demonstrate business management skills to maintain optical operations.
- Provide patient care and troubleshoot issues within the scope of practice of an optician.

Our training emphasizes practical experience backed by strong theoretical knowledge in the skills and technology necessary to be successful in opticianry.

Completion of the Optical Sciences Eyeglasses program will earn the student a Diploma in Optical Sciences Eyeglasses.

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 online final examinations 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 in Brightspace.

To use Brightspace, any current and supported operating system and web browser will work, however Mozilla and Chrome are preferred.

A student-facing web camera either as part of your device or as an external plug-in device is required for evaluations, assessments and exams.

NEW Effective Fall 2026, the Optical Sciences Programs will use the online test proctoring service, Honorlock, for evaluations, assessments and final exams. **Honorlock DOES NOT ALLOW the use of iPads, tablets or handheld devices, therefore, students must avoid using these devices for their evaluations, assessments and final exams.**

To access course content in Brightspace, 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. ***REMINDER that an iPad, tablet or handheld device cannot be used during evaluations, assessments and final exams.***

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 to mid-April for Winter intake and beginning of August 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 Learner Success Guide.

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 courses each consisting of 500 dispensing hours and a clinical manual, under the direct supervision of a qualified and approved preceptor. The 500 dispensing hours and clinical manual are due at the end of each semester. ***The time frame to complete a clinical course is approximately 3-4 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 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

OPSC1311 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

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

OPSC2211 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.

OPSC2213 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.