



# JOB of the Week



**Job name: Optometrist**

**Job description:** Optometrists are trained to recognise eye diseases, such as glaucoma and cataracts, as well as general health conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure. You'll refer patients to doctors or other optometrists with higher qualifications when necessary. Patients range from very young children to the elderly. You may see both NHS and private patients. You may sometimes, with higher qualifications, share the care of patients with chronic conditions or manage patients with low-risk eye conditions. Most of these activities involve the use of specialist equipment.

**Tasks you will undertake in the job:** As an Optometrist, you'll need to:

- speak to patients to get detailed case histories from them
- examine patients' eyes to detect vision defects and signs of injury, disease or abnormality
- manage and monitor some eye conditions, either autonomously or alongside other healthcare professionals
- detect signs and symptoms of general health conditions such as diabetes
- fit spectacles or contact lenses and discuss vision-related matters with patients, and offer advice and reassurance
- offer help and advice to patients when choosing frames and lenses
- liaise with and write referral letters to doctors and other optometrists with higher qualifications
- meet sales targets with regard to selling spectacles or contact lenses.
- You may also:
  - manage and train staff, including other optometrists, dispensing opticians and optical assistants
  - manage the retail aspects of spectacles, contact lenses and other vision care products
  - administer, organise and plan the development of the practice
  - liaise with sales representatives from vision care product suppliers

**Qualifications you will need for this job:** To work as an optometrist you must be registered with the GOC, the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. In order to do this, you must:

- get a minimum of a 2:2 honours degree, or equivalent, in optometry from a GOC-approved optometry course
- complete one year's salaried pre-registration training under the guidance of a GOC-registered optometrist, who is a member of the College of Optometrists
- pass the College of Optometrists' GOC work-based and final assessments.

Selected universities currently running approved degree courses. Entry requirements vary between universities but you'll typically need a minimum of AAB at A-level, or equivalent, with at least two science subjects. Graduates with a 2:1 degree or above in a science-related subject may also be considered for entry on to an approved undergraduate course.

**Skills required for this job (core competencies):**

Communication	Resilience	Organisation	Teamwork
Problem Solving	Initiative	Creativity	Digital literacy

**Sectors in which Optometrists would normally work:** Most optometrists work in high street practices, which may be independent or part of a regional or national chain. You may decide to work in hospitals alongside other healthcare professionals such as ophthalmologists and orthoptists. Some hospital optometrists perform minor surgery. Optometric practice is changing with more healthcare (as opposed to retail) related work being conducted in community practice. This is facilitated by the increasing use of technology in community practice to help optometrists diagnose and manage patients with eye disease. It's also possible to work in academic settings doing research and/or teaching, or in the optical manufacturing industry working for spectacle lens, contact lens and ophthalmic instruments.

## Career path and progression within the industry:

As a qualified optometrist, you will undertake continuing professional development (CPD) throughout your career. You must renew your registration with the GOC annually in order to practise, and undertaking continuing education and training (CET) is a statutory requirement for continued registration.

The GOC's CET scheme is a points-based system, run over a three-year cycle, which ensures that you keep up to date with the knowledge and skills needed to practise safely throughout your career. You can gain CET points through a variety of learning activities, including: attending lectures, conferences and workshops; presenting papers at conferences; supervising, teaching and assessing; developing business skills and studying for a postgraduate qualification. You'll need to achieve a minimum number of CET points by the end of each cycle to stay on the register.



**Salary:** Salary range for an Optometrist is £28 000 - £65 000 (depending on experience and qualifications), average salary £36 920; average wage in the UK is £28 758



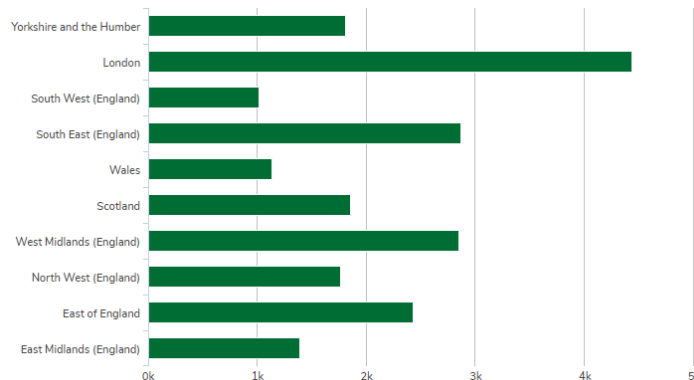
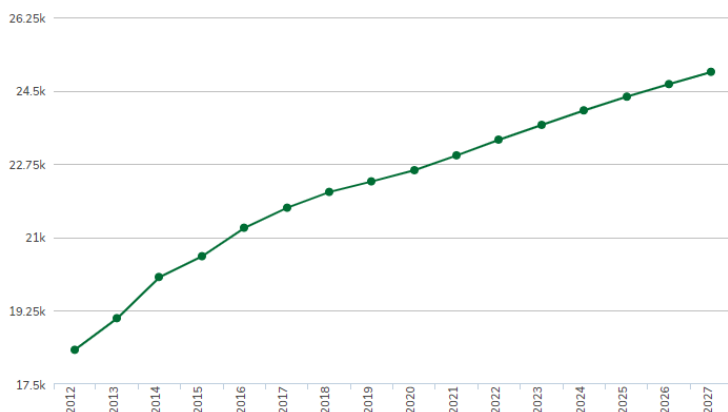
**Working hours:** 26 average working hours in the week (37.5 working hours in the average working week). Some work will be weekends and evenings.

**Workforce in the UK:** 24% male / 76% female workforce

## Essential skills you need to show:

clinical decision-making and an ability to use professional judgement; excellent communication skills to deal with a range of people; strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to put anxious patients at ease; the ability to understand and apply scientific principles and methods; confidence in using complex equipment; teamwork skills; manual dexterity, precision and accuracy; good organisation and administrative skills; attention to detail a willingness to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) to keep up to date and patience.

**This job in the future:** The workforce is projected to grow by 8.7%, creating 2 000 jobs; in the same period, 53.7% of the workforce is likely to retire, creating 12 300 job opportunities.



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[www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors)

[www.ucas.com/careers-advice](http://www.ucas.com/careers-advice)

[www.kudos/cascaid.co.uk/#/](http://www.kudos/cascaid.co.uk/#/) (you all have a log on for this service)

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