Optician

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Overview

Become a multi-disciplinary team member dedicated to leading-edge vision care with our Optician diploma.

In this program, you'll learn:

- ocular health, including in-depth coursework in ocular pathology
- the principles of refracting and performing accurate refraction tests
- about optical technology and equipment
- how to fill prescriptions for eyeglasses and contact lenses with precision
- how to ensure the perfect fit for a diverse clientele
- to assess, create and meet the specific eyewear needs of each customer.

In addition to these clinical skills, you'll build a strong business and retail management foundation tailored to the optical and optometry field.

Our program offers a blend of classroom lectures, laboratory sessions, and clinical practicum placements, ensuring you receive a realistic taste of your future professional environment.

As a graduate, you'll find opportunities to work in optical retail stores, ophthalmic or optometrist clinics, or other medical settings where eyewear and contact lenses are created and dispensed.

Set your sights on a rewarding occupation where you can genuinely impact people's quality of life with the SAIT Optician program.

Traits, skills and aptitudes

Opticians tend to be objective, methodical and social.

You need:

- a courteous, pleasant manner
- effective communication skills
- the ability to think critically
- the ability to resolve conflicts
- the ability to study and interpret customer issues
- an eye for detail and accuracy
- to work well under stress, maintain professional behaviour and regulate your emotions
- a good sense of spatial relationships
- good fine motor skills (to manipulate small objects and instruments).

Opticians may wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for long periods, which includes exposure to latex and disinfection materials. They may also spend most of their working hours on their feet and performing repetitive tasks.

Some positions required extended work hours or shiftwork, including evenings and weekends.

You are strongly encouraged to refer to the ALIS website for career, learning, and employment information for opticians to ensure you can successfully meet the occupational requirements for the program and profession.

SAIT program pathways

If you have previously completed SAIT's Ophthalmic and Optometric Assisting certificate program, you will meet the admission requirements to enter this diploma program.

The certificate program's curriculum aligns with the first semester of this program, so you can earn your diploma with just one and a half additional years of study.

Practicum, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning

You will complete two required clinical practicums.

You will be assigned practicum placements with consideration given to your preference of location. However, due to limited availability in Calgary, it might be necessary for you to travel or relocate outside the city.

The healthcare field has a strong focus on health, wellness, and fitness to practice due to the demanding nature of the work and Occupational Health and Safety requirements. As such, special considerations will not be granted based on individual circumstances or preferences, except those stated as protected grounds when an accommodation has been approved.

In compliance with the practica agreements with our clinical partners, you will be required to provide specific documentation before you can participate in your practicum. Find out what requirements you need for this program.

Accreditations, designations and certifications

The Optician program is aligned with the competencies outlined by the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), and is accredited by Accreditation Canada.

Graduates will be prepared to challenge the NACOR exam and obtain a dual license as a dispensing optician and a contact lens fitter.

Credentials

Upon successful completion of this program, you'll be awarded a SAIT Optician diploma.

Admission requirements

Applicants educated in Canada

All applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency and meet the following requirements or equivalents:

- at least 65% in English Language Arts 30-1 or 30-2, and
- at least 65% in Math 30-1 or 30-2, and
- at least 65% in Physics 20 or Biology 30 or Science 30

or,

- completion of SAIT's Ophthalmic and Optometric Assisting program

SAIT accepts high school course equivalents for admission for applicants educated outside Alberta.

Applicants educated outside of Canada

All applicants who were educated outside of Canada must demonstrate English language proficiency and provide proof they meet the program admission requirements with an international document assessment. Find accepted educational documents and assessment options.

SAIT may also accept courses completed at certain international post-secondary institutions.

Costs

2026/27 tuition and fees

The following costs are effective as of July 1, 2026.

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees is based on the suggested schedule of study. Following a modified schedule will impact the fees you pay per semester and may alter final costs.

Domestic Students

Year Year	Number of semesters Number of semesters	Tuition fees Tuition fees	Additional fees Additional fees	Total per year Total per year
1	2.5*	$11,121	$2,015	$13,136
2	2.5*	$11,121	$2,015	$13,136
			Total cost:	**$26,272**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*.5 indicates a combination of full-time semester(s) and part-time semester(s) in the same academic year. In many cases, students are completing a practicum during their part-time semester. Part-time students are those taking less than nine (9) course credits in a semester. You will not be eligible for the UPass in your part-time semester.

International Students

The program total is based on the estimated amount you will pay if you enter this program during the 2026/27 academic year. The program total amount listed on your letter of admission may appear higher. This amount is your maximum tuition guarantee for the program. SAIT will not exceed this maximum, regardless of changes in tuition and fees between academic years.

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	2.5*	$24,552	$2,015	$26,567
2	2.5*	$24,552	$2,015	$26,567
			Total cost:	**$53,134**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for international students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*.5 indicates a combination of full-time semester(s) and part-time semester(s) in the same academic year. In many cases, students are completing a practicum during their part-time semester. Part-time students are those taking less than nine (9) course credits in a semester. You will not be eligible for the UPass in your part-time semester.

Books and Supplies

Books, supplies and uniforms are approximately $2,800.

This is a bring-your-own-device program with a standard computer hardware and software requirement. See the specific requirements on our computers and laptops page. An Apple or Windows-based laptop is required. Tablets or mobile phones are not suitable alternatives.

Find your booklist on the SAIT Bookstore's website. Booklists are created by semester and available approximately two weeks before classes begin.

Required equipment/tools

Before attending labs, you must purchase a professional optician toolkit containing essential optical tools commonly used in practice.

The kit is purchased directly through an external provider for approximately $380. Information regarding the kit will be provided during your first semester.

Required uniforms and personal protective equipment (PPE)

You will require:

- navy scrubs (pants and top)
- closed-toe, water-impermeable shoes.

Additional industry-approved PPE will be discussed before the start of labs.

Additional fees

- The School of Health and Public Safety strongly recommends that students meet Alberta Health Services' Standard for Immunization of Post-Secondary Health Care Students. Fees for completing immunization requirements start at $85, however, may increase, depending on your vaccination history, and any new immunizations you choose to acquire.
- You are responsible for additional expenses related to your practicum, including pre-practicum requirements and relocation costs to practicum sites outside of Calgary.
- The National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulator (NACOR) certification exam fees are:
  - Optical Sciences 1: Eyeglasses and optical sciences - $750
  - Optical Sciences 2: Advanced practice contact lenses - $750
- Annual registration fees for the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) are approximately $650. Applications to, and a license from, a regulatory body are required.