Optometric Residencies

“THE CORNEA AND CONTACT LENS RESIDENCY HAS PROVIDED ME WITH INVALUABLE PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND CONFIDENCE THAT WOULD NORMALLY COME WITH SEVERAL YEARS OF PRACTICING OPTOMETRY.”

program Completing a residency in optometry is a unique and invaluable experience! The rich rewards gained from the year of advanced clinical training under an experienced mentor serve to enhance career opportunities and add to the level of confidence the resident has when beginning his/her post-residency career.

Optometric residency programs, which typically start in the summer and last for one year, provide a stipend that varies depending on the institution funding the program. Currently, there are over 160 optometric residency programs with more than 340 approved positions that are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).

Specific information on both accredited and non-accredited programs can be accessed through ASCO’s Online Residency Program Directory at http://asco.surveydomain.org/residency/search.

areas of emphasis There are currently eleven (11) areas of emphasis for optometric residencies:

- Family Practice Optometry
- Geriatric Optometry
- Vision Therapy and Rehabilitation
- Community Health Optometry
- Primary Eye Care
- Pediatric Optometry
- Ocular Disease
- Cornea and Contact Lenses
- Low Vision Rehabilitation
- Refractive and Ocular Surgery
- Brain Injury Vision Rehabilitation

The title of each residency reflects the primary focus of the clinical subject area and indicates advanced clinical education in that subject area.

employment Many schools and colleges of optometry require residency training as a basic qualification for new clinical faculty positions. The Veterans Health Administration has always looked favorably at residency training as a prerequisite for employment at its hospitals and outpatient clinics. Growing numbers of traditional private practice optometrists who are seeking an associate or partner are aware of the benefits of residency training and prefer applicants with that credential. For those wishing to pursue employment opportunities with ophthalmology, or in multi-disciplinary practice settings, the value-added benefits of residency training are carefully considered by those potential employers whose backgrounds reflect the traditional medical model of training.

deadlines While the deadlines encountered for applying to residency programs differ slightly, most require that application materials be received by the sponsoring organization around February 15. Applicants are encouraged to begin making inquiries about specific programs by late summer or early fall. Records of school transcripts, national board examination results, and letters of recommendation are examples of the required application materials. Most programs require a face-to-face interview by all applicants. Residency programs receive their applications and match with their residents through the Optometric Residency Match (ORMatch). Program Supervisors and applicants must rank their choices through ORMatch by the ranking deadline which is typically in early March. ORMatch releases match results within a week of the ranking deadline. Please visit the ORMatch website at http://www.natmatch.com/ormatch.html for a full discussion of application procedures and deadlines.

“THE RESIDENCY HAS PROVIDED ME WITH UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES AND UNPARALLELED EXPERIENCE THAT WILL BENEFIT MY FUTURE CAREER AS AN OPTOMETRIST.”