

# OAT Optometry Admission Test

## **Introducing the First Optometry Admission Test (OAT) Newsletter**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the OAT newsletter! This newsletter will be distributed on an annual basis, and is designed to provide you with the latest information on the OAT Program. The OAT Committee, which oversees the OAT's administration, policies, and procedures, met in February 2016. This newsletter provides an update on decisions made during that meeting, as well as subsequent OAT activities and information relevant to communities of interest.

The topics in this newsletter are as follows:

- 2016 Changes to Quantitative Reasoning Test (QRT) Specifications
- Electronic Score Reporting
- 2016 OAT Fee
- Testing Program: 2015 Participation
- Frequency of OAT Validity Studies
- Reminders

## **2016 Changes to Quantitative Reasoning Test (QRT) Specifications**

The emphasis of the Quantitative Reasoning Test (QRT) has been adjusted to focus more heavily on critical thinking skills.

## **Electronic Results Reporting**

By late 2016, candidates will be able to view their testing results online within two to three weeks of their testing appointments by logging into the "My Account" portal website found [here](#). Candidates will continue to receive a printout of their unofficial scores immediately following their test.

By the end of 2016, optometry institutions will have access to a new electronic portal where they can retrieve candidates' OAT results and search, sort, and generate reports. Secure accounts and instructions will be provided to institutions before the rollout date.

## **2016 OAT Fees**

Effective July 1, 2016, the administration fee for the OAT was increased to \$435.

Effective July 1, 2016, at the time of application candidates can select as many optometry institutions as they wish at no additional charge. A fee will still be charged for any score reports requested after the time of application.

## Testing Program: 2015 Participation

The OAT is offered year-round at Prometric Test Centers in the United States and its territories, including Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. During 2015, 5,536 seats for testing were available on each business day at 287 professional level testing centers in North America.<sup>1</sup> A total of 4,007 administrations of the OAT were conducted. Examinee satisfaction with the test center experience remains generally positive, based on responses to a post-test survey.

Examinees' self-reported ethnicities, expressed as percentages, from 2011 to 2015 were as follows:<sup>2</sup>

<b>Ethnicity / Race</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
1 American Indian / Alaska Native	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.3	0.8
2 Asian	30.3	31.2	30.6	30.9	34.6
3 Black	4.8	4.3	5.0	4.1	4.9
4 Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	n/a	n/a	1.6	0.8	0.6
5 White	56.6	55.7	54.1	54.7	59.1
6 Hispanic	6.9	7.9	7.4	8.2	n/a
Non-Respondent	6.9	3.0	7.7	5.0	6.4

Examinees' self-reported gender, expressed as a percentage, from 2011 to 2015 was as follows:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Males	31.8	31.6	30.0	30.3	28.1
Females	68.2	68.4	70.0	69.7	71.9

## OAT Validity Studies

OAT validity studies report the relationship between pre-optometry grade point averages, OAT scores, and the academic achievements of a sample of students during their first and second years in U.S. optometry institutions. These studies provide validity evidence that supports the use of examination results to make admission decisions concerning examinees.

Findings from the 2015 OAT Validity Study are consistent with the results of previous OAT validity studies, and provide evidence of the value of including OAT scores as part of optometry institutions selection criteria. This report is based on data from 2011–2013. The complete report is available [here](#).

Historically, validity reports are conducted annually and require significant effort from optometry programs and the OAT Program to produce. With few exceptions, results have been highly consistent from year to year.

Going forward, the OAT Committee will conduct OAT validity studies every two years. When substantive changes are introduced that could affect the relationship between test performance and student performance, the OAT Committee will conduct a validity study the first year for which data is available. A less-frequent cycle for validity studies will allow resources to be reallocated to provide for additional analyses and further insights into program performance.

<sup>1</sup> Certain Prometric professional level testing centers also operate on weekends. Visit [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com) for additional details.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates were permitted to choose one or more ethnic categories to describe themselves. Given this, the total percentage can exceed 100% when individual percentages are summed.

The continued participation of institutions in providing data for OAT validity studies is vital to the success of the OAT program, and is greatly appreciated.

### Reminders

- OAT sample test items are available online in the “OAT Test Preparation Material and Helpful Information” section of the website located [here](#).
- A limited number of partial fee waivers are available each calendar year for cases of severe financial hardship. The waiver covers 50% of the OAT fee. See the [OAT Guide](#) for eligibility requirements and necessary documentation.

Please share this newsletter with others. Your comments and suggestions are welcome and appreciated. Please send them to [eatexam@ada.org](mailto:eatexam@ada.org).

Sincerely,

Dr. David Damari  
Chair, OAT Committee