



EXTERNSHIP SURVEY REPORT

Academic Year 2024-2025

December 2025

updated March 2026

www.optometriceducation.org

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry 2024-2025 Externship Survey

School Abbreviations used in ASCO Data Reports

Active Member Schools 2024-2025

AZCOPT	Arizona College of Optometry, Midwestern University
CCO	Chicago College of Optometry, Midwestern University
IAUPR	Inter American University of Puerto Rico, School of Optometry
ICO	Illinois College of Optometry
IUSO	Indiana University, School of Optometry
KYCO	University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry
MCO	Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University
MCPHS	MCPHS University, School of Optometry
NECO	New England College of Optometry
NOVA	Nova Southeastern University, College of Optometry
NSUOCO	Northeastern State University - Oklahoma College of Optometry
OSU	The Ohio State University, College of Optometry
PCO/Drexel	Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Drexel University, Elkins Park Campus
PUCO	Pacific University, College of Optometry
RMUCOM	Rocky Mountain University, College of Optometric Medicine
SCCOMBKU	Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University
SCO	Southern College of Optometry
SUNY	State University of New York, College of Optometry
UABSO	University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Optometry
UCB	University of California - Berkeley, Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science
*UDMSO	University of Detroit Mercy, School of Optometry
UHCO	University of Houston, College of Optometry
UIWRSO	University of the Incarnate Word, Rosenberg School of Optometry
UMSL	University of Missouri at St. Louis, College of Optometry
WUCO	Western University of Health Sciences, College of Optometry

Associate Member Schools 2024-2025

ÉOUM	University of Montreal, School of Optometry
UWOVS	University of Waterloo, School of Optometry & Vision Science

*Did not participate in the survey. First class entered in fall 2025.

**Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Externship Survey
Academic Year 2024-2025**

Individuals at Each Institution with Primary Responsibility for Externship Program*

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*UDMSO's first class matriculated in fall 2025 and the externship program is under development.

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry

Externship Survey

Academic Year 2024-2025

Type of Externship Setting

	Veterans Administration		Private Practice ¹		Co-Management Center ²		Indian Health Service		Military		Community Health Centers		Other Hospital-Based		Other ³	
	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed	# Affiliated Externship Sites	# Externships Completed
AZCOPT	21	38	39	94	5	17	12	16	3	2	4	6	1	3	3	6
CCO	23	45	41	72	6	22	4	4	0	0	1	4	1	1	3	7
IAUPR	10	7	26	58	12	21	1	0	0	0	3	6	3	4	1	0
ICO	43	51	81	159	21	41	1	0	3	1	3	5	9	12	0	0
IUSO	16	68	17	41	15	62	1	4	2	11	0	0	3	20	1	4
KYCO	15	24	50	92	7	9	3	4	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
MCO	10	38	22	49	2	2	0	0	2	2	3	12	1	0	4	12
MCPHS	24	52	15	26	12	21	1	0	0	0	8	51	0	0	2	2
NECO	29	139	19	47	10	35	2	5	3	7	14	131	9	44	17	79
NOVA	17	43	25	107	24	125	2	7	2	3	1	0	1	12	0	0
NSUOCO	2	4	8	7	8	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OSU	16	61	9	27	5	16	0	0	1	2	1	2	2	5	1	9
PCO/Drexel	42	129	116	212	50	122	5	10	9	11	1	1	9	29	0	0
PUCO	17	87	72	206	32	95	8	7	0	0	2	12	0	0	22	63
RMUCOM ⁴	7	0	62	0	5	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
SCCOMBKU	17	111	19	15	14	34	14	44	9	24	3	16	3	8	1	30
SCO	22	114	86	360	16	60	2	10	6	16	1	6	0	0	1	6
SUNY	16	41	23	84	7	46	1	0	3	6	4	42	4	37	4	39
UABSO	17	68	78	84	14	23	3	4	1	0	0	0	2	4	3	5
UCB	18	115	2	10	3	11	1	10	2	12	2	25	2	9	1	3
UHCO	8	10	30	97	1	1	3	14	3	10	4	67	0	0	0	0
UIWRSO	11	21	27	75	6	14	0	0	2	8	2	15	0	0	0	0
UMSL	7	23	20	38	12	29	1	6	0	0	2	36	0	0	0	0
WUCO	14	70	44	94	6	21	3	15	4	13	7	28	1	0	4	15
Active Member Total	422	1359	931	2054	293	843	69	160	59	130	68	466	52	188	68	280
ÉOUM	0	0	4	11	3	9	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	20	0	0
UWOVS	0	0	70	172	7	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Member Total	0	0	74	183	10	37	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	20	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	422	1359	1005	2237	303	880	70	162	59	130	68	466	54	208	68	280

¹ Includes OD solo practices, OD group practices and OD/MD practices that perform primary care optometry in addition to basic ocular disease/vision therapy, contact lens care, etc.

² Includes OD/MD practices whose emphasis is secondary and tertiary ocular care.

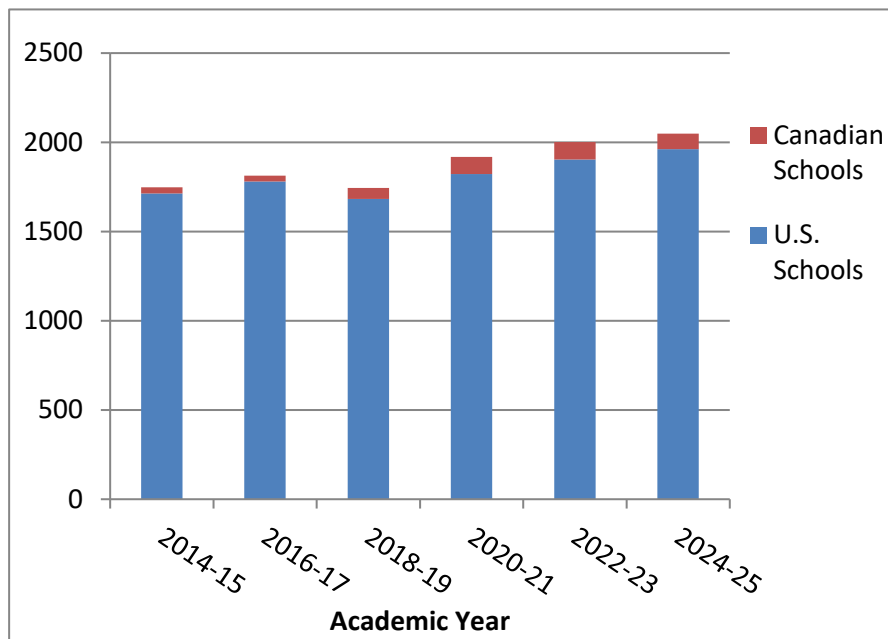
³ "Other" might include community service, college clinics, and non-hospital medical systems and university medical settings. For SCCOMBKU, it includes their University Eye Center Los Angeles which mainly serves the underserved population. For SUNY, it includes SUNY in-house externship rotations (Advanced Care, CL, Peds, Vision Rehab). Secondary and tertiary OD care. For MCPHS, it includes academic sites.

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry # Externship Sites and # Externships Completed

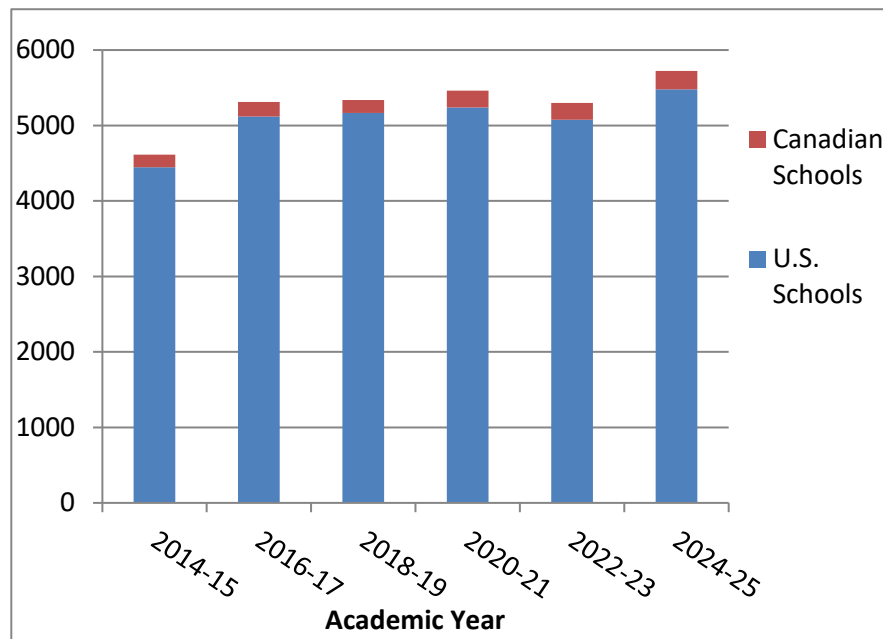
U.S. and Canadian Schools

2014-2025

Affiliated Externship Sites



Externships Completed



		2014-15	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	2024-25
# Affiliated Externship Sites	U.S. Schools	1714	1780	1683	1823	1904	1962
	Canadian Schools	34	33	61	96	98	87
	Total	1748	1813	1744	1919	2002	2049
# Externships Completed	U.S. Schools	4445	5121	5168	5241	5077	5480
	Canadian Schools	171	191	170	220	224	242
	Total	4616	5312	5338	5461	5301	5722

**Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Externship Survey
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	How many students rotated through at least one VA site?	What percentage of the 3rd year is composed of externships?	What percentage of the 4th year is composed of externships?	How often does a representative of the institution visit each externship site?	How many of your sites are shared with another school?	What role do the students have in the assignment of their externship sites?	Does the program mandate rotation through specific types of externship sites? If yes, please explain.	When does the externship site selection occur in the curriculum?	Are there any didactic components (distance education courses) that are mandated in conjunction with the clinical externship? If yes, please list these courses.	Additional Comments
AZCOPT	37	0.0%	75% Each student completes one rotation internally at the Eye Institute and three rotations externally.	Every 1-5 years Externship sites are visited every 4 years alternating in-person and virtual visits.	44	Students preference rotation sites then sites are assigned according to these preferences using a computer algorithm.	Yes Students complete four rotations during fourth year - 1 ocular disease rotation, 1 primary care rotation, 1 student choice rotation, and 1 internal rotation at the Eye Institute.	Third Year, September	Yes Summer: active recall assignments; Fall: PAM cases, mock part II exam; Winter: licensing, credentialing, and professional development assignments; Spring: attendance at Senior Week on campus	
CCO	45	0.0%	100.0%	Every 1-5 years Every 4 years	59	Students select their top 3 externship sites preferences based on Ocular Disease, Primary Care and a Specialty site. Preferences will be assigned using an algorithm in our Rotation Management System.	Yes Students must rotate through Ocular Disease which consist of FQHC, VA, and IHS. Internal and Primary Care are the student's choice.	Third Year, August Summer quarter of their third year	Yes Students have an assignment each quarter. Summer: Peps practice with virtual AI, SimConverse. Fall: Complete 30 PAM cases. Winter: complete credentialing and licensure assignments. Spring: Students are required to attend Senior Days, which are held on the last 2-3 days before graduation.	
IAUPR	7	0.0%	50% Fourth year is divided in 2 semester: 1 semester is on-island rotations (school' clinics), other semester non-school clinic	Every 1-5 years	25	Students choose the sites taking in consideration each site requirements.	No Not enough VA or Hospital based sites affiliation to make it as a requirement.	Third Year, October	No	
ICO	45	0.0%	75% Students complete either 2 or 3 externships	Every 1-5 years	91	Students select their sites based on availability and randomized selection priorities.	Yes Students are required to complete a primary care rotation and an ocular disease rotation.	Third Year, August	Yes Externs have mandatory monthly assignments.	
IUSO	49	0.0%	75% Half of the class has 75% externships and half has 50% externships	Every 1-5 years We visit in person or virtually every 4 yrs	34	They submit preferences in order of priority.	Yes Students are required to complete a site emphasizing primary care and a site emphasizing ocular disease management.	Third Year, November The students submit preferences in October and they receive their assignments in November.	No	

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KYCO	24	0.0%	78.0%	Every 1-5 years Includes externship director sig shared sites	40	There are no rankings or other preferences utilized; all students are considered equal. Students list their sites based on obtaining all specialty exposure required for graduation. If on-campus, they rotate through all required specialty settings; if all sites are off campus, their three semesters together must represent all specialties needed. Otherwise, sites are listed by the students desire with random drawings as needed, then moving the student who was not drawn to their next available listed site.	No as discussed above, through their three rotations, they must obtain all specialty exposure required for graduation. If on-campus, they rotate through all required specialty settings, so their external sites are based on their choice; if all sites are off campus, their three semesters together must represent all specialties needed.	Third Year, September The process begins just before the start of the Fall Semester of Third year and concludes within the first two to three weeks of that semester.	Yes Grand rounds are conducted monthly. Future didactic courses are being considered but have not yet been added to the curriculum	Grand rounds are conducted monthly with on-campus students on site and externship students joining and presenting via Zoom. attendance is mandatory with rounds recorded for those who may miss; those individuals must write a summary of each missed presentation.
MCO	38	0.0%	100% Not all students are required to rotate through our internal clinic, though 8/38 do, as it is considered a site. It is counted here in the "other" category.	Every 1-5 years Every 8 years in-person, with a virtual visit after 4 years	18	They rank their top 8 choices.	Yes We require that they rotate through a VA, and that their other sites have a minimum patient base in contact lenses, pediatrics, and low vision (if their VA does not have a low vision clinic)	Third Year, October	Yes Students take a web seminar course each semester that complements their rotation including self-reflection activities and review of specialty concepts that they may not be using regularly at their current site.	
MCPHS	54 All students are required to complete one VA rotation	0.0%	100.0%	Every 1-5 years Alternate virtual and in-person site visits.	36	Students rank sites and provide reasoning for their rankings. The information they provide is taken into consideration after students are ranked according to clinical and didactic GPA.	Yes 1 CHC, 1 VA, and 1 elective (which can also be another VA rotation)	Third Year, September	Yes Capstone course, abstract submission, poster presentations via virtual Grand Rounds	
NECO	119	14.0%	72.0%	Every 1-5 years	76	Students rank their sites based on categories and selections are made from GPA listing and random selection process	Yes Students are required to complete a community health center and also a Veterans' Affairs Hospital	Third Year, October	No	
NOVA	37	0.0%	75.0%	Every 1-5 years	27	They make their own selections from the available sites.	Yes Students are required to select a Medical-Surgical site and a Primary Care/OD site.	Third Year, November	No	

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NSUOCO	4	0.0%	25.0%	Every 1-5-years	3	Students submit their top three externship preferences and are assigned one externship rotation.	No We only have one externship rotation for our students, there is no mandate.	Fourth Year, September	No	
OSU	61 All of our students rotate through the VA for one semester	0.0%	73% All of the OSU students have one full day of externships during their semester where they see patients on campus.	Every 1-5 years	15	The Extern Director presents all of the sites to the students prior to ranking. The students rank each site and provide comments. I then assign the students to each site based on their rankings and comments.	Yes All externs must rotate through the VA	Third Year, July	No	
PCO/Drexel	118	12%	100.0%	Every 1-5 years	145	Selection is all self-directed by the students. They are responsible for all research, contact, and selection of available sites in the program.	Yes Students are required to rotate at one primary care site during their 3rd year. During the 4th year, traditional students are required to rotate at one ocular disease site, one collaborative care site, and one contact lens primary care site. The disease or Collaborative Care site must be an IHS or VA. Students enrolled in the accelerated scholars program must rotate through a VA/IHS, contact lens, and pediatric site.	Second Year, May Students enrolled in the traditional 4-year program select during the spring/summer between their second and third year. Students enrolled in the accelerated 3-year program select during the spring/summer between their first and second year.	No	
PUCO	76	0.0%	100.0%	Every 6-10 years	100	Student driven selection process	Yes Ocular Disease and Primary Care are required rotations -Ocular Disease (1 min./ 2 max.) -Primary Care (1 min./ 2 max.) -Specialty/Other (2 max.) -Co-Management (1 max.)	Second Year, May	No	

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RMUCOM (external rotations will start in 2026)	0	0.0%	100.0%	Every 6-10 years	20	They complete worksheets with site preferences.	Yes Ocular disease and primary care	Third Year, April	Yes Emergency medicine, EENT, Psychiatry	
SCCOMBKU	76	0.0%	100.0%	Every 1-5 years A representative of the institution conducts a site visit to our active externship sites every 4 years. This can be virtual or in-person, with a requirement of an in-person site visit every 8 years or upon establishing a new externship program and before we send any students to the site.	38 Many of our VA, several military sites, and a handful of other sites take students from other schools. This is an estimated number.	The students select their sites from a list of pre approved sites. They are given a number that ranks the students to select a "lottery number profile". To help with ensuring equity of experiences, the lottery number profile consists of: - Which rotation will be the on campus assignment - A high priority number - A low priority number - A middle of the road number	Yes We allow our students to choose their rotation sites for each rotation. However - we have a list of Primary Sites with a designated number of student spots. The students get to choose in order their rotation based off this list of Primary Sites. We offer a handful of "Alternate" spots which if chosen, allow a student to select a site from our Alternate Site list. These Alternate Sites are not guaranteed a student each rotation, but will usually take a student if requested. Requirements for student rotation site selections: 1. Must rotate to at least 1 VA, 1 IHS, or 1 Community Health Ctr. 2. Cannot rotate to 3 of the same type of sites. (Ex: 3 VA, 3 IHS, or 3 Community Health Centers) 3. Cannot rotate to the same site more than once. 4. Cannot rotate to more than one private practice / specialty clinic (ex: Contact Lenses or Peds/VT) 5. Cannot choose more than 1 military site 6. Can only choose 1 alternate site (if space is available)	Third Year, September Students take part in a series of meetings for our site selection process. They begin researching in the summer of their third year. Our first meeting takes place in August and the students select their lottery profile picks for each rotation based off a random list. We then have the students select their sites for rotations 1 and 2 during the second week of September, and rotations 3 and 4 during the third week.	Yes During their 4th year externships, students are required to spend a rotation at our Ketchum Health clinic in Anaheim. During this time, they are required to attend a series of mandatory Contemporary Topics in Optometry workshops and presentations for CE credit.	

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SCO	47	0.0%	67.0%	Every 6-10 years	86	The students select their top preferred sites and are placed based on home state and GPA.	Yes 1 private practice site and 1 institutional site.	Third Year, July	Yes Each student must complete 5 SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) case reports/ semester. During the private practice rotation, students must complete 2 Practice Management Modules & 10 Transitions Modules, and during the institutional rotation must submit an Expanded Case Report. Preceptors may mandate other didactic assignments. Students with unexpected, prolonged absences may be subject to additional didactic assignments.	
SUNY	41 SUNY currently does not mandate a VA rotation.	0.0%	100% 3 quarters external rotations, 1 quarter 'in-house' with rotation through all specialty clinics: pediatrics, children with special needs, vision rehab, head trauma, vision perception, neurology, contact lens, glaucoma, retina, anterior segment/dry eye/cataract, electrodiagnostics, myopia management.	Every 1-5 years	38	Students choose sites through ranked choice on Meditrek. There are 3 site categories allowing students to rank 6 sites in each category, as well as an overall top 6 site ranking (regardless of site category). Students can specify specific quarters they prefer.	Yes SUNY separates all rotations into 3 distinct categories: Hospital/Multidisciplinary; Interdisciplinary (OD/MD); Specialty (private practices, specialty referral clinics). Students are typically required to rotate through one school in each category in addition to their in-house rotation.	Third Year, August Students are introduced to the sites in April of 2nd year during an externship fair, allowing face-to-face interaction with external site staff/supervisors. In June of 3rd year they are introduced to the application process and submit their final choices by August 31st. Student preferences are cross-referenced against site availability in September for site assignment.	No While in-house, students participate in Senior Seminar, a 3-hour weekly class complete with guest lectures and case discussion. At external sites didactic components are determined by the site supervisor.	

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UABSO	36	14.0%	50.0%	Every 1-5 years	51	The students select sites from a list of pre-approved sites. We do have several VAs that we staff the entire year. Those required VA sites must be filled prior to students selecting optional externship sites.	Yes Each student has to spend at least one six week rotation at a private practice site and one eight week rotation at an institutional site.	Second Year, June The site selection begins in the summer between second and third year and is finalized in November of 3rd year.	Yes Students are required to complete interactive cases, typical day reflection report, and preceptor meetings report.	
UCB	62	0.0%	60.0%	Every 1-5 years UCB follows visitation guidelines as set forth by the ACOE.	18	The students use a lottery system to select from the externships available to their class.	Yes Each student has three unique externship rotations. The requirement is that one rotation must be an externship from the Medical category and one must be from the Primary Care category.	Third Year, September Externship selections usually occur in mid to late September, but occasionally in early October.	Yes Optometry 440A, Optometry 440B, Optometry 440C, Optometry 441A, Optometry 441B, Optometry 441C.	An online course for 4th year students is designed to investigate ocular and systemic disease cases, with an emphasis on discussing and referencing best available research evidence to support clinical decision making. The overall course mission is to enable the student clinician to translate high quality scientific evidence into clinical care.
UHCO	10	0.0%	67.0%	Every 1-5 years	18	Students select each of their two rotations from our list of affiliated rotations. One selection round is based on an academic/clinical performance ranking score. One selection round is based on a randomly assigned number.	No	Third Year, October	No	
UIWRSO	19	0.0%	67% 2 external rotations/1 in house rotation	Every 6-10 years	34	The students complete a selection sheet to the Externship Director. They can choose which is more important: timing of in house rotation or sites. Placement is then based on class rank.	No However, we are discussing mandating an ocular disease site.	Third Year, August The site selection form is due at the end of August. Final placement notification is mid October once confirmed by the externship sites.	Yes OPT 8201/8211/8221 Clinical Externship Externs are required to complete a written case report (case from the externship site), journal discussion (on a given topic) and comment on 2 classmates' journal discussion.	

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Academic Year 2024-2025**

	How many students rotated through at least one VA site?	What percentage of the 3rd year is composed of externships?	What percentage of the 4th year is composed of externships?	How often does a representative of the institution visit each externship site?	How many of your sites are shared with another school?	What role do the students have in the assignment of their externship sites?	Does the program mandate rotation through specific types of externship sites? If yes, please explain.	When does the externship site selection occur in the curriculum?	Are there any didactic components (distance education courses) that are mandated in conjunction with the clinical externship? If yes, please list these courses.	Additional Comments
UMSL	23	0.0%	100.0%	every 1-5 years	12	Students are allowed to rank their top 10 choices in each category and are allowed to share additional comments with special circumstances (e.g. family lives in area, financial considerations with leases, children/spouses, etc).	Yes Opt 8780: External Rotation in Institutional Patient Care Opt 8790: External Rotation in Ocular Disease Management Patient Care Opt 8770: External Rotation in Clinical Care III (Community Service Care Clinic) Opt 8814: External Rotation in Clinical Care I (Specialty MD/OD) Opt 8830: External Rotation in Clinical Care II (Elective) Opt 8700: UMSL Pediatric/Binocular Vision Patient Care Opt 8710: UMSL Contact Lens Patient Care	Third Year, May	Yes Opt 8870: Practice Management II Opt 8880: Practice Management III	
WUCO	48	0.0%	100.0%	every 1-5 years	32	o For OD 2025 cohort, it was a lottery process. Most students received 2 elective sites and 2 priority sites depending upon their numbers and how the lottery process unfolded. o A new selection process was implemented fall 2024, for OD 2026 cohort, where students listed sites for each rotation based on certain rules and policies. The students were then assigned to sites based on a holistic, student-centered approach where expectations of sites were aligned with students' characteristics. This new selection process ensures a clinically, educationally, well-rounded, and diversified clinical experience throughout 4th year.	Yes Students are expected to have sufficient exposure to ocular disease and primary care optometry. This is achieved through the "priority" process.	Third Year, August	Yes o Practice management – spring of 4th year o Students have to complete Podcast CE assignments during the fall and spring rotations	
Active Member Total	1076			Every 1-5 yrs: 20 Every 6-10 yrs: 4 Every 10+ yrs: 0 Other: 0	1060		Y: 19 N: 5	Second Year: 3 Third Year: 20 Fourth Year: 1	Y: 14 N: 10	

(continued on following page)

updated March 2026

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
 Externship Survey
 Academic Year 2024-2025

	How many students rotated through at least one VA site?	What percentage of the 3rd year is composed of externships?	What percentage of the 4th year is composed of externships?	How often does a representative of the institution visit each externship site?	How many of your sites are shared with another school?	What role do the students have in the assignment of their externship sites?	Does the program mandate rotation through specific types of externship sites? If yes, please explain.	When does the externship site selection occur in the curriculum?	Are there any didactic components (distance education courses) that are mandated in conjunction with the clinical externship? If yes, please list these courses.	Additional Comments
ÉOUM	0	0.0%	25.0%	Every 1-5 years	4	They chose the site and rotation according to a lottery system.	No	Third Year, October	No	Students from Canada can no longer access the VA system, because they cannot get a Social insurance number.
UWOVS	0	0.0%	67% Two of the three terms for 4th years are composed of external clinical rotations. The third term is completed internally at the school's clinic.	Every 6-10 years	12	Students select from a list of approved sites in sequence in a randomized order, though accommodations are made for medical and personal exemption.	Yes Students are expected to have sufficient exposure to ocular disease and primary care optometry throughout their two external rotations.	Third Year, January Site selection occurs in January and is finalized in February of their third year. Site selection occurs in January and is finalized in February of their third year.	No	Requirements changed for Canadian students. Non-UW citizen trainees must have a non-immigrant F-1 or J-1 student classification or an I-20 certificate to be eligible and have a US SSN.
Associate Member Total	0			Every 1-5 yrs: 1 Every 6-10 yrs: 1 Every 10+ yrs: 0 Other: 0	16		Y: 1 N: 1	Second Year: 0 Third Year: 2 Fourth Year: 0	Y: 0 N: 2	
GRAND TOTAL	1076			Every 1-5 yrs: 21 Every 6-10 yrs: 5 Every 10+ yrs: 0 Other: 0	1076		Y: 20 N: 6	Second Year: 3 Third Year: 22 Fourth Year: 1	Y: 14 N: 12	