

OPHTHALMOLOGIST



Summary of profession

Ophthalmologists are a specific kind of doctor who treat illnesses, diseases and conditions that affect the eye. While ophthalmologists can be thought of generically as 'eye doctors' and perform some of the same duties as optometrists, they differ in that ophthalmologists perform eye surgery and treat eye diseases. Ophthalmologists also examine eyes and prescribe contact lenses and glasses.

Working hours, patterns, and environments

Ophthalmology is mainly a 9-5 specialty. Out-of-hours work is lighter than many medical specialties and shift work is unlikely. The specialist nature of eye emergencies means that ophthalmologists are required to be on call but 'hospital at night' generic teams deal with routine ward work out of hours. Small teams are on call overnight and at weekends.

Education and skills

Ophthalmologists are a type of physician, and, thus, they are required to earn a medical degree. The process is a lengthy one, with a prospective ophthalmologist having to earn a 4-year bachelor's degree, complete four years of medical school and undergo 3-8 years of internships and residencies. Common undergraduate programs include pre-med, biology and chemistry; coursework that will help prepare you for a career as an ophthalmologist include biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, organic chemistry, physics and medical ethics.

Job growth and opportunities

The employment outlook predicted an increase in job openings from 2014-2024.