

Extending excellence in eye care
Education
at
LVPEI

Bachelor of Science in Optometry



What is optometry?

Optometry originates from two Greek words – *optos*=sight and *metron*=to measure. Optometry is an autonomous and regulated (licensed or registered) health care profession.

What is an optometrist ?

Optometrists are primary health care practitioners who provide comprehensive eye and vision care. They perform refraction and dispense optical devices; they can detect, diagnose and manage eye diseases, and help rehabilitate individuals with irreparable vision loss.



Are optometrists and ophthalmologists the same?



An optometrist is different from an ophthalmologist or a dispensing optician. In India, optometrists can practice all aspects of eye care, except prescribe drugs and perform surgery. In western countries like USA and Canada, optometrists are allowed to prescribe drugs and do some forms of invasive surgery. Optometrists work together with ophthalmologists and opticians towards the unified goal of combating blindness.

What does an optometrist do?

Optometry is a rewarding career option for individuals with interests in patient care, clinical and basic-science research, education and administration. Today, optometry is among the top 10 income-earning professions in Indian and abroad. It is estimated that there are only about 8000 fully-qualified optometrists in India, amounting to approximately one optometrist for every 1.25 lakh population ([source: www.optometryindia.com](http://www.optometryindia.com)). There is, therefore, a huge demand for fully qualified optometrists in a developing nation like India.



Service delivery

Optometrists can work as **patient care providers** in an independent private practice, at eye-specialty hospitals or by engaging in public health-related activities at the community level. They prescribe contact lenses and low vision devices or manage the eye health of a niche population such as infants and children (pediatrics) or sports personnel.

Scientific research

Optometrists can also pursue **cutting-edge basic science and clinical research** that adds to our knowledge of vision disorders and promotes newer diagnostic and management strategies for managing them. There are many opportunities to pursue postgraduate education [Master of Science (MS), Doctorate (PhD), Doctor of Optometry (OD)] in world-renowned universities in India and in Australia, Canada, UK and USA.



Academics

As **educators**, optometrists can teach at various optometry schools across India. The need for well-trained optometrists is ever increasing in India and there are at least a dozen schools of optometry. Graduates of Bausch and Lomb School of Optometry can and have taken up teaching positions at these schools, training the future generation of qualified optometrists.

Management and marketing

Optometrists can also function as **administrators and marketing professionals** in industry settings such as contact lens and spectacle manufacturing, optical devices manufacturing and pharmaceuticals. Optometrists have an advantage as they can address the product design both from the patient's and the industry's perspective.



Where can I study optometry?



Many institutions across India offer diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in optometry. LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) in collaboration with the Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani, offers a 4-year comprehensive undergraduate Bachelor of Science (BS) program in optometry. The program is conducted at the Institute's Bausch & Lomb School of Optometry (BLSO) located at Kismatpur campus, Hyderabad.

Who is eligible for the bachelor's degree program offered by LVPEI and BITS-Pilani?

Candidates with an Intermediate BiPC or MPC and a minimum percentage of 60 are eligible to apply. Applications have to be sent to BITS, Pilani, after the notification appears in the newspapers. Admission exams and interviews are held in July. The course begins on the first Monday of the month of August.

See also, the website of BITS: <http://discovery.bits-pilani.ac.in/index.html>

What is the program's curriculum?

The first three years of education at BLSO is a combination of didactic lectures and practical training in the clinic. The final year comprises entirely of clinical training ("internship") at LVPEI wherein students get hands-on experience in diagnosing and managing the most complicated eye disorders.

LV Prasad Eye Institute is a world class teaching and research hospital with globally renowned clinicians and cutting edge equipment. Students are exposed to international faculty and national conferences. The range of

patients at LVPEI give young optometrists exposure to an extremely large array of eye diseases and solutions. Since rehabilitation of those with incurable vision impairment is an integral part of the institute, optometrists also learn about low vision rehabilitation and sight enhancement. In short, a varied and ideal learning environment.



The Bausch & Lomb School of Optometry



BLSO was established in 2000 with the generous support of Bausch & Lomb, USA, in a six-acre campus located in lush surroundings. The BLSO campus with its well designed classrooms, library and amphitheatre makes it an ideal environment for knowledge enrichment.

The campus is equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual facilities, optical and dispensing laboratories, a clinic for training students and a tele-connectivity link for connecting this campus with other campuses in the LVPEI network for lectures and other activities. BLSO also has a resource center with standard textbooks and reference books, compact discs and vision-related scientific journals. These resources can be accessed in an air-conditioned reading room on all days from 6.00 till 22.45 hrs. In-house computing facility is also available with free access to the Internet for academic activities. The campus has a cafeteria, separate hostels for boys and girls (shared accommodation, common bathrooms) and sports and recreational facilities.

Faculty Profile

The following serve as core senior faculty of the school. Several part-time and visiting faculty from educational institutions in-and-around Hyderabad also participate in the teaching program at BLSO.

Dr Vijaya K Gothwal, BOpt, MAppSc, PhD

Head, Meera & LB Deshpande Centre for Sight Enhancement

Vijaya K Gothwal completed her Bachelor's degree in Optometry from the Elite School of Optometry, Chennai. She did her Masters and PhD from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane, Australia, followed by a post-doctoral fellowship from Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, South Australia. She was awarded the prestigious Constance W Atwell award for Excellence in Low Vision Research in 2002 by the Low Vision Research Group Committee.

Dr Shrikant R Bharadwaj, BSopt, PhD

Scientist, Prof Brien Holden Eye Research Centre

Shrikant Bharadwaj received his Bachelor's degree (BS) in Optometry from the Elite School of Optometry, Chennai [affiliated to the Birla Institute for Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani], a PhD in Vision Science from the University of California – Berkeley School of Optometry, USA, and a post-doctoral fellowship from the Indiana University School of Optometry, USA. He has received several awards for his research work, including the Fight for Sight postdoctoral fellowship and the Phi Beta Kappa membership.

Mr Srinivas Marmamula, MSc (Community Eye Health)

Faculty, International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye care

Srinivas Marmamula completed his optometry education at LV Prasad Eye Institute and a Masters in sociology from Osmania University. He received a joint Scholarship from the Department for International Development (DFID - UK) and the British Council for Prevention of Blindness (Boulter Fellowship) for doing an M.Sc in Community Eye Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London. He is pursuing a PhD from the School of Optometry & Vision Science, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, with support from Vision CRC, Australia.

Dr Vanita Pathak-Ray, FRCS (Ed), FRCOphth (Lon), FIIMSA

Consultant, VST Centre for Glaucoma Care

Vanita Pathak-Ray graduated in medicine from the University of Calcutta and completed her basic ophthalmology training in London and specialty training in Cardiff, UK. She was elected fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, Scotland and of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, London, England. In 2005, she obtained her Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) from UK and was appointed consultant at The Royal Glamorgan Hospital, UK.





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