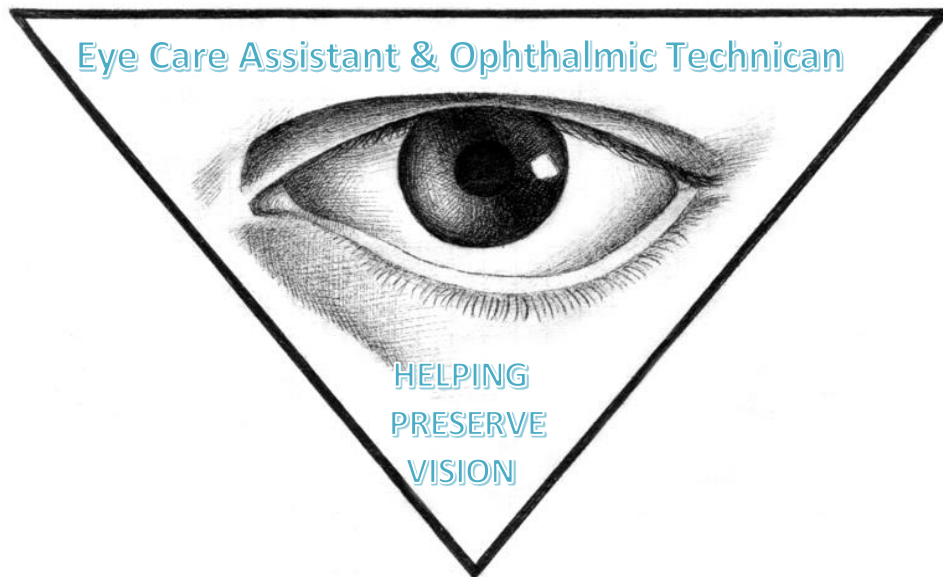


COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

Eye Care Assistant Certificate Program
&
Ophthalmic Technician Degree Program

FALL 2025



Registration Deadline Date:

Friday, August 15, 2025 by 5pm or until course fills

Registration is on a first-come, first serve basis.

Attend a mandatory advising session by reviewing the following [page](#).

Note: Please see specific program registration or admission packets for detailed information on when to begin completing health requirements, drug tests, CPR, criminal background checks and proof of insurance submission. Timing varies depending upon either entrance to or participation in the clinical component of a given program. Funds paid to Edward Corporate Health or to a personal health care provider/ source, CastleBranch.com, insurance companies, and funds used towards CPR completion are not eligible for any sort of refund from College of DuPage if the required course(s) are not successfully completed.

EYE CARE ASSISTANT CERTIFICATE & OPHTHALMIC TECHNICIAN DEGREE PROGRAM

What is an Eye Care Assistant/Ophthalmic Technician?

Ophthalmology is a specialized branch of medicine focusing on the health of the eye. As a health care professional, assistants and technicians will work primarily with ophthalmologists (MD of Ophthalmology) and medical optometrists (Doctor of Optometry). In addition to routine eye care, ophthalmologists are specialists that treat and diagnose eye conditions. They also perform ocular minor procedures and eye surgeries, both medical and cosmetic. They can work in various clinical settings including private, group, and hospital ophthalmology departments.

The duties of the eye care assistant/ophthalmic technician include providing diagnostic assistance to the eye doctor, by performing appropriate tests in assessing their vision accurately. This will then help the eye doctor in diagnosis of eye conditions and diseases. Obtaining an accurate visual acuity, performing measurements for determining glasses/ contact lens prescriptions, eye pressures, visual fields, muscle function and getting the patient to the point where they are dilated and ready to see the doctor, are typical duties of an assistant/technician. They also are required to provide documentation of the testing typically in an electronic health record format. They can also assist with minor and surgical procedures. They triage phone call and emergencies and provide patient education. They ensure that the ophthalmology clinic functions well and efficiently.

Eye Care Assistants and ophthalmic technicians are by the eye doctor's side and play a vital role the individual will help the ophthalmologist or optometrist with diagnostic and treatment-oriented procedures.

Many eye care industry partners seek experienced eye care assistants and technicians who have clinical knowledge for career options beyond the clinic and hospital.

What does the career and salary outlook look like for eye care assistant and ophthalmic technicians?

Eye care assistants and ophthalmic technicians are vital members of the eye care team. Demand and employment opportunities for certified assistants and technicians have been increasing due to the greater need of provision of eye care health. These roles prepare students to work in entry-level and intermediate eye care settings. As a result, the salaries and benefits are competitive to the needs of the field.

We have made every effort to make the information in this packet complete. Please contact me if you further questions at (630) 942-8398 or e-mail thomasm90@cod.edu.

Also feel free to please check out our websites for more info.

[Eye Care Assistant Certificate Program](#)
&
[Ophthalmic Technician Degree Program](#)

Sincerely,

Mitzi Thomas

Mitzi Thomas, COMT, BPS
Associate Professor /Program Chair

Last Updated 10/14/2024

Program Descriptions

The Eye Care Assistant Certificate and Ophthalmic Technician program is a clinical ophthalmic assistant program accredited by the International Council of Accreditation (ICA) for Allied Ophthalmic Education Programs. More information about ICA can be found on: www.icaccreditation.org

Both programs are approved by the Illinois Community College Board. College of DuPage is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Eye Care Assistant Certificate

Students may earn the Eye Care Assistant Certificate at College of DuPage and gain the skills for entry-level positions as ophthalmology and optometric assistants under the supervision of licensed eye care professionals. Students who decide to pursue the Ophthalmic Technician degree program will have been introduced and completed the introductory Eye Care Assistant Program courses if they intend to move forward in the next level of competency in the Eye Care Field.

Upon graduation, students can sit for the national certification exam for the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA), administered by I-JCAHPO. Information about a career as an Eye Care Assistant is available at: www.jcahpo.org.

Ophthalmic Technician Degree

Students earning the Ophthalmic Technician Degree at College of DuPage may continue their career path after completing the Eye Care Assistant pre-requisite courses to gain the skills for intermediate-level positions as ophthalmology and optometric assistants under the supervision of licensed eye care professionals.

The Certified Ophthalmic Technician is the second core designation level confirming knowledge in 19 specific content areas specifically designed to test the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant or Ophthalmic Technician program graduate who intends to advance their career in the eye care field.

Upon graduation, students can sit for the national certification exam for the Certified Ophthalmic Technician (COT), administered by I-JCAHPO. Information about a career as an Ophthalmic Technician is available at: www.jcahpo.org.

Laboratory Skills, Competencies and Exams: Both programs have mandatory competencies that must be passed by the end of each semester. If the student does not successfully pass the competencies, the student will be withdrawn from the program. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA for all required coursework once accepted into the program.

Students are expected to comply with the rules, regulations and procedures of College of DuPage and the affiliated clinical hospital sites. Non-compliance with rules, regulations and procedures is a basis for dismissal from either program. The Health Sciences Program Standards for Professional Conduct is available upon request and will be disseminated to the students upon their acceptance into the program.

Information about a career as an Eye Care Assistant or Ophthalmic Technician is available at:
www.jcahpo.org.

Mission Statement of the Programs

- To help create professionals who are trained to preserve eye health by being a vital team member of the growing and in demand eye care field.
- To demonstrate reliability, self-discipline, cooperativeness, and professional deportment and demeanor in all activities related to eye care.
- To help students in developing life skills of critical thinking, effective communication, professional behaviors, as well as demonstrate safe & ethical practices.
- Provide curriculum that is built around the ICA accreditation standards as well as enriching learning experiences for the students.
- Helping create professionals who are trained to preserve eye health by being a vital team member of the growing and in demand eye care field.
- To provide a hybrid learning structure for students to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree, which will prepare graduates to take the certification exam and to meet the needs of the community.
- To collaborate with student support services to market the profession of eye care and ophthalmology, and advise potential program applicants, orient ECA Program and Ophthalmic Technician students to COD services and provide special academic assistance where necessary.

Goals of the Programs

Upon completion of the Eye Care Assistant & Ophthalmic Tech Programs, the graduate should be able to:

- Demonstrate and be skilled in diagnostic testing as required by the standards and guidelines of JCAHPO and International Council of Accreditation (ICA).
- Assist the ophthalmologist & optometrist by performing delegable tasks.
- Collect data, administer treatment, assist in ophthalmic surgical procedures, and supervise patients in a safe and effective manner deemed appropriate according to the training level and may be delegated by a supervising ophthalmologist as applicable by law.
- Become skilled professionals, qualified by didactic and clinical ophthalmic training, who perform ophthalmic procedures under the direction or supervision of a licensed ophthalmologist who is responsible for the performance of the ophthalmic medical technician.
- Render supportive services to the ophthalmologist, optometrist and management.
- Assist the physician by collecting data necessary to reach those decisions and by transmitting and executing the ophthalmologist's instructions.
- Have knowledge, problem-solving skills, psychomotor, behavioral, and clinical competencies as well as demonstrate clinical thinking.
- Skillfully and accurately perform the clinical diagnostic tests and patient services in conformation with the didactic curriculum.
- Relate tactfully and sympathetically to patients as adapt to patient's needs.
- Demonstrate proficiency in both written and spoken communication skills with patients, families and staff.
- Demonstrate the ability to contribute to the profession and community.
-

Licensure/Credentialing

- Students can sit for the national certifying exam, the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) or the Certified Ophthalmic Technician (COT), administered by JCAHPO.

Policies and Procedures

All Nursing and Health Science Division policies and procedures are found on our [Division website](#). It is the students' responsibility to ensure they have reviewed and understand the policies and procedures. The Nursing and Health Science Division reserves the right to change, at any time, without notice, these policies and procedures.

Standard Skills in Health Career Programs

To participate in any Health Career program at College of DuPage that has a direct patient care or clinical education component, applicants must possess additional non-academic skills. These occupational standards are consistent with the duties of the entry-level professional in that field and are set by the individual program. These skills, which protect the health and well-being of patients, may include but are not limited to the ability to the below list. Please refer to the [Health Science Program Essential Functions](#).

In the Eye Care Assistant profession, you may be exposed to fumes, chemicals, cold, noise, radiation, blood/body fluids, and infectious diseases. Students who do not meet these standards may be considered ineligible for a program and can be withdrawn from all program classes. If you are unsure whether you can meet these requirements, you are advised to consult an adviser, counselor or member of the program faculty to discuss the situation, and/or schedule an appointment with your physician prior to applying to the program or enrolling for classes.

Statement on Clinical Education

Eye Care Assistant

Students should complete a minimum of 480 hours of full-time ophthalmologist and certified technician supervised clinical experience. This requirement is based on the requirements that the Joint Commission of Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) requires. JCAHPO requires that students complete these clinical requirements prior to being able to apply for the COA (Certified Ophthalmic Assistant) Certification.

60 clinical days must be obtained by the end of the 1-year certificate program. To fulfill these requirements, students will be scheduled:

Semester 1 - 1 day weekly

Semester 2 & 3 - 2 days weekly

Specific schedules will be provided 1st week of class

Clinical site placement will be determined by the program instructor. The program instructor will place the student in clinical rotations based on clinical site availability for each term. Individual clinical site requirement(s) will need to be met before student can begin rotations at the site.

Currently the program has reached out to ICA in hopes of waiving the clinical component for students who are currently employed by an Ophthalmologist. If you feel you fit under this category, please set up an individual meeting with the program chair to discuss further. This is not guaranteed currently as our accreditation needs to approve it first.

Ophthalmic Technician

Students should complete a minimum of 960 hours of full-time ophthalmologist and certified technician supervised clinical experience. This requirement is based on the requirements that the Joint Commission of Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) requires. JCAHPO requires that students complete these clinical requirements prior to being able to apply for the COT (Certified Ophthalmic Technician) Certification.

120 clinical days must be obtained by the end of the 2-year Associate's Degree program. To fulfill these requirements, students will be scheduled between 2 to 3 days at clinical sites per week.

Currently the program has reached out to ICA in hopes of waiving the clinical component for students who are currently employed by an Ophthalmologist. If you feel you fit under this category, please set up an individual meeting with the program chair to discuss further. This is not guaranteed currently as our accreditation needs to approve it first.

Clinical Affiliates:

Our clinical partners are based primarily in the DuPage and Chicagoland areas and suburbs. Since we are the only eye care assistant program, we receive requests for a partnership in clinical education from all over the state. We are also able to accommodate out of states requests on a case by case basis. Sites are subject to change. Please see program website for most updated list or discuss with program chair.

Program Costs**Eye Care Assistant**

Please visit the [Program Costs webpage](#) for estimated cost.

Ophthalmic Technician

Please visit the [Program Costs webpage](#) for estimated cost.

Eye Care Assistant & Ophthalmic Technician Registration Requirements

The following are **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS** for the Eye Care Assistant & Ophthalmic Technician program. These Registration requirements are a part of your **PACKET**. Your packet must be complete in order to be considered for **REGISTRATION** and allowed to **REGISTER** for the course.

NOTE: Admission Committees for all Health Science programs has the right to deny admission to any applicant that they feel is unable to fulfill these essential functions as described.

Use this **Registration Requirements checklist** to assure that you have everything you need to complete your packet. There is a **Registration Deadline** of **Friday, August 15, 2025 at 5pm or until course fills** for this program. Be sure all items below are completed in advance of that deadline.

- _____ 1. Attend a mandatory **Eye Care Assistant/Ophthalmic Technician [Advising Session](#)**. **It is required that an applicant attend an advising session within a 12-month period prior to the application deadline.**

- _____ 2. If you have not been admitted to College of DuPage, please complete the **non-refundable \$20 [College of DuPage General Admissions Application](#)** online. **This application is for general admissions to College of DuPage only.**

- _____ 3. To ensure that all your eligible credits are evaluated towards the admission requirements, turn in **ALL** official Transcripts from institutions that you have attended. Immediately:
 - a. Submit your official transcript(s) to **College of DuPage, [Office of Student Records](#)**. *If College of DuPage is the only institution you have attended, you do not need to request official transcripts.*

 - b. Verify receipt of your transcript(s). Log into myACCESS account, click on 'myACCESS for Students', select '**My Profile**'. The receipt status of your transcript will be listed under '**Transcript Institutions**'.

- _____ 4. **One pre-requisite course(s) must be completed by the end of Summer 2025 semester with a grade of "C" or better. Classes must have been completed less than five years ago (Summer 2020 – Summer 2025). The other course(s) must be taken concurrently during Fall.**
 - a. Anatomy & Physiology 1551/1571 & 1552/1572 OR A&P 1500. Note: If you choose to take the ANAT two-course sequence (1551 & 1552 OR 1571 & 1572, then both courses need to be completed by the end of the Summer 2025 semester)

 - b. Health Sciences 1110, Biomedical Terminology (Must be equivalent to College of DuPage course).

NOTE: If you have an international transcript from high school or college, it must first be evaluated. Please visit the following website <https://cod.edu/records/international-transcript-evaluation.aspx> for details.

NOTE: SURGT 1000: Ethics in Health Care must be completed by the end of the Eye Care Assistant program (Summer 2026)

Schedule an appointment with a **Health Program Advisor** by calling 630-942-2259 or e-mailing healthcareadvising@cod.edu. The Health Program Advisor will develop an Academic Plan to ensure you complete all prerequisites in the correct order.

- _____ 5. Complete a Criminal Background Check. The College of DuPage has partnered with CastleBranch.com, a background check service that allows students to purchase their own background checks online. The results of a background check are posted to the CastleBranch.com website in a secure, tamper-proof environment, where the students, as well as the program coordinator can view the background check.

To order your background check, please follow the instructions below.

- a. Go to CastleBranch.com
- b. In the **PLACE ORDER** box, enter package code: **OK53bg**
- c. Select a method of payment: Visa, MasterCard or Money Order
- d. You will receive a **Release Form** when placing your order and it will be in your CastleBranch To-Do List
 - a. Complete and return the CastleBranch Release Form by faxing to e-mailing to expedite@castlebranch.com or 910-343-9731

Please note, that your background check will **not** get processed until the release form is received so please return to them ASAP.

The results will be available at your e-mail in approximately 48 to 72 business hours. ***You must wait until your results are completed and the Program Specialist has received your results before you are eligible to register.***

- _____ 6. Submit the completed Health Requirement Acknowledgement Form (page 9) to clinicalrequirements@cod.edu

- _____ 7. Once all above steps are completed, please e-mail clinicalrequirements@cod.edu to notify them of your interest in either the Eye Care Assistant or Ophthalmic Technician program. You will then receive instructions to register for EYE 1101.

College of DuPage

Health Career Programs

Health Requirement Acknowledgement

Part of this program is to complete health requirements prior to the first clinical rotation. Please see the [health requirement packet](#) for details. **Please do not complete these requirements until you are instructed to do so.** Along with the health requirements, you will also complete a drug test and background check.

Failure to submit the necessary paperwork, obtain the required examinations and vaccinations, and/or are obtain clearance to participate in all the program's clinical activities, without restrictions and/or precautions, you may be considered ineligible for the program and can be withdrawn from the program courses in which you are registered.

I, hereby, acknowledge that:

- a. I have reviewed the [Health Requirement packet](#) for the program and understand that the program has specific requirements that must be completed during specific time periods as directed.
- b. I have reviewed and understand that enrollment and participation in the clinical component of the program is subject to the practices and requirements of the clinical site, which may necessitate additional health requirements.
- c. I understand that my failure to complete the health requirements mandated by the program and/or the clinical site may prevent either my registration into the program or continuation in the program.

Signature

Date

Print

Program Name

Email to clinicalrequirements@cod.edu or return to:
College of DuPage Nursing & Health Science Division Office, HSC 1220

Eye Care Assistant Pre-requisite Courses

(While it is recommended to have both courses completed by Summer 2025, student must have only 1 of the below courses completed by the end of Summer 2025 semester. The other course(s) must be taken concurrently during Fall)

Pre-Requisite Required Classes: Must be no more than 5 years' old and have earned a "C" or higher

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | A&P 1500 | Survey of Human Anatomy & Physiology | 4 credit hours |
| | | OR | |
| | A&P 1551 or 71 | Human Anatomy & Physiology I | 4 credit hours |
| | | AND | |
| | A&P 1552 or 72 | Human Anatomy & Physiology II | 4 credit hours |

(This will count as the Physical and Life Science requirement for the A.A.S. degree.)

- | | | | |
|----|------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 2. | HLTHS 1110 | Biomedical Terminology | 3 credit hours |
|----|------------|------------------------|----------------|

(This will count as the Global/Multicultural Studies or Contemporary Life Skills requirement for the A.A.S. degree.)

Total: 7-11 credit hours

Eye Care Assistant Program Sequence

Eye Care Assistant Program Classes: Fall Semester

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|
| EYE 1101 | Principles of Eye Care Assistant I | 8 credit hours |
| *Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction, face-to-face lecture/lab time and clinical rotations | | |

Total: 8 credit hours

Eye Care Assistant Program Classes: Spring Semester

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| EYE 1102 | Principles of Eye Care Assistant II | 8 credit hours |
| *Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction, face-to-face lecture/lab time and clinical rotations. | | |

Total: 8 credit hours

Eye Care Assistant Program Classes: Summer Semester

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| EYE 1103 | Principles of Eye Care Assistant III | 9 credit hours |
|----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|

*Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction, face-to-face lecture/lab time and clinical rotations.

Total: 9 credit hours

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- | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| SURGT 1000 | Ethics in Health Care | 4 credit hours |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------|

29 credit hours

Ophthalmic Technician Pre-requisite Courses

EYE 1101	Principles of Eye Care Assistant I	8 credit hours
EYE 1102	Principles of Eye Care Assistant II	8 credit hours
EYE 1103	Principles of Eye Care Assistant III	9 credit hours
SURGT 1000	Ethics in Health Care	4 credit hours

General Education Courses Required to Graduate

It is highly recommended that potential candidates complete as many or all of these courses prior to entrance into the program.

Please see the following link to the Student Planning Worksheet for the Associate in Applied Science Degree for details.

https://cod.edu/student_life/resources/counseling/pdf/student_planning/student_planning_aas_current.pdf

General Education Required Categories:

Speech 1100, 1120 or 1150	3 credits
English 1101 or 1105	3 credits
Math 1100, 1102, 1120, 1428, 1431, 1635, Psych 2280 or Socio 2205	3-5 credits
Humanities and Fine Arts	3 credits
Social and Behavioral Sciences	3 credits

Ophthalmic Technician Program Sequence

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***Ophthalmic Technician Program Classes: Fall Semester***

OPTH 2101      Ophthalmic Technician I      4 credit hours

\*Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction and clinical rotations

**Total: 4 credit hours**

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Ophthalmic Technician Program Classes: Spring Semester

OPTH 2102 Ophthalmic Technician II

*Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction and clinical rotations

5 credit hours

Ophthalmic Technician Program Classes: Spring Semester

OPTH 2103 Ophthalmic Technician III 5 credit hours

*Classes will be in a Hybrid format which includes: online instruction and clinical rotations

Total: 10 credit hours

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**14 credit hours**

## **High School Graduate Suggested Education Plan for Ophthalmic Technician Pathway**

*This suggested education plan is an efficient way to complete your ophthalmic technician degree at the College of DuPage within two years of receiving your high school diploma.*

\*\* The example shows beginning in the summer semester upon high school graduation.

You may substitute courses and semesters as you choose, however, deadlines for applications and requirements are firm. Also note program courses are only offered once a year.

### **AAS Ophthalmic Technician (64 credits)**

\*\*Math and English Placement Tests must be taken prior to Math and English course registration.

**SEMESTER 1:** (Example Summer after graduation)

ANAT 1500 or ANAT 1551-or-1571 ( 4 credits)

**SEMESTER 2** (Year 1 Fall Semester)

- HLTHS 1110 (3 credits)
- SURGT 1000 (3 credits)
- EYE 1101 (8 credits)

**SEMESTER 3:** (Year 1 Spring Semester)

\*\*If you chose ANAT 1551-or-1571, fulfill second course requirement:

- ANAT 1552-or-1572 (4 credits)
- EYE 1102 (8 credits)
- Speech 1100, 1120 or 1150 (3 credits)
- Humanities and Fine Arts (3 credits)

**SEMESTER 4:** (Year 1 Summer Semester)

\*\*\* By the end of this semester, you will have completed all the requirements for the Eye Care Certificate\*\*

EYE 1103 (9 credits)

**SEMESTER 5:** (2<sup>nd</sup> Year/Fall Semester)

- OPTH 2101 (4 credits)
- Math 1100, 1102, 1120, 1428, 1431, 1635, Psych 2280 or Socio 2205. (3-5 credits)
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 credits)
- English 1101 or 1105. (3 credits)

**SEMESTER 6:** Spring Semester 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

- OPTH 2102 (4 credits)
- OPTH 2101 (5 credits)

Please see the following link to the Student Planning Worksheet for the Associate in Applied Science Degree for Ophthalmic Technician details.

[https://www.cod.edu/student\\_life/resources/counseling/pdf/student\\_planning/student\\_planning\\_aas\\_current.pdf](https://www.cod.edu/student_life/resources/counseling/pdf/student_planning/student_planning_aas_current.pdf)

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