

Ophthalmic Laboratory Technician



Occupational Description

Ophthalmic laboratory technicians cut, grind, edge, and finish lenses and fabricate eyewear. Duties include transposing prescriptions, selecting appropriate lens forms, and processing materials to meet the prescription.



Job Description

Working from a prescription written by an ophthalmologist or optometrist, the ophthalmic laboratory technician uses various types of equipment and machines, including grinders, polishers, and lensometers, to ensure that the finished lenses match the specifications. The technician also assembles the lens and frame parts into a finished set of eyeglasses.

Chief duties of the ophthalmic laboratory technician include:

- Safely and effectively operating and maintaining equipment needed to produce lenses and make eyewear
- Performing basic mathematical and algebraic operations required on the job
- Tinting and coating lenses and performing minor frame repair
- Performing impact resistance treatment and testing
- Working with ophthalmic dispensing opticians to address and rectify customer/patient complaints
- Providing follow-up services, including eyewear adjustment, repair, and replacement



Employment Characteristics

Most ophthalmic laboratory technicians work 40-hour weeks, either in retail stores that make and sell prescription glasses or for optical laboratories. Some technicians work for optometrists or ophthalmologists. Depending on the size of the business, the technician may either handle every phase of lenses and frame production or work with other technicians, assembly-line style.



Employment Outlook

As the percentage of middle-aged and elderly people increases, so will these individuals' need for corrective eyewear. Much of the growth in this profession will occur in retail optical chain stores that make prescription eyewear on the premises and offer quick turnaround time.



Educational Programs

Length. Ophthalmic laboratory technician certificate programs are 1 year.

Prerequisites. Although no formal requirements exist, ophthalmic laboratory technician students should have a broad knowledge of science and mathematics and a high level of manual dexterity.

Curriculum. Ophthalmic laboratory technician educational programs include instruction in optical theory, surfacing and lens finishing, and reading and applying prescriptions.



Inquiries

Careers

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Contact Lens Society of America
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Reston, VA 22070 703 437-5100

National Academy of Opticianry
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Optical Laboratories Association
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