

Ophthalmic Medical Technician/Technologist



Occupational Description

Ophthalmic medical technicians and technologists are skilled persons qualified by academic and clinical training to perform ophthalmic procedures under the direction or supervision of the ophthalmologist.



Job Description

Ophthalmic medical technicians and technologists assist ophthalmologists by collecting data and performing clinical evaluations ordered by ophthalmologists. They are qualified to

- Take a medical history
- Administer diagnostic tests
- Take anatomical and functional ocular measurements
- Test ocular functions (including visual acuity, visual fields, lensometry, tonometry, keratometry readings, corneal topography, photography, strabismus measurements, retinoscopy, and refinement and sensorimotor functions)
- Administer topical ophthalmic medications
- Instruct the patient (as in home care and in use of contact lenses) and provide patient education

Duties include:

- Taking patient histories
- Providing patient services
- Taking eye measurements
- Administering diagnostic tests and eye evaluations
- Maintaining ophthalmic instruments
- Performing a variety of clinical skills

Ophthalmic medical technologists perform all duties performed by technicians but are expected to do so at a higher level of expertise and to exercise considerable technical clinical judgment. Additionally, technologists may be expected to perform ophthalmic clinical photography and fluorescein angiography, ocular motility and binocular function tests, specular microscopy, A-scans, B-scans, FDA studies, clinical research, and electrophysiological and microbiological procedures, as well as to provide instruction to and supervision and training of other ophthalmic personnel.



Employment Characteristics

Ophthalmic medical technicians and technologists are employed primarily by ophthalmologists but may be employed by medical institutions, clinics, hospitals, ASC, or physician groups and assigned to an ophthalmologist who is responsible for their direction. They may be involved with the patients of an ophthalmologist in any setting for which the ophthalmologist is responsible. Salaries vary depending on employer and geographic location.



Educational Programs

Length. Programs are generally 1 year for technicians and 2 years for technologists.

Prerequisites. High school diploma or equivalent for technicians and 2 years of undergraduate study for technologists. **Curriculum.** Instruction should follow a planned outline, which includes courses in anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, medical laws and ethics, psychology, ocular anatomy and physiology, ophthalmic optics, microbiology, ophthalmic pharmacology and toxicology, ocular motility, and diseases of the eye. The curriculum also includes diagnostic and treatment procedures, including visual field testing, contact lenses, ophthalmic surgery, and the care and maintenance of ophthalmic instruments and equipment. Students also must have supervised clinical experience, during which they have opportunities to apply theory to practice through correlated and supervised instruction in clinical practice areas.



Inquiries

Careers and Certification

Inquiries regarding careers, continuing education, and certification criteria should be addressed to:

Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO)

2025 Woodlane Dr
St Paul, MN 55125-2998
651 731-2944 or 800 284-3937
E-mail: jcahpo@jcahpo.org

Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology (ATPO)

2025 Woodlane Dr
St Paul, MN 55125-2998
651 731-7239
E-mail: ATPOMembership@jcahpo.org

Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in collaboration with:

Committee on Accreditation for Ophthalmic Medical Personnel (CoA-OMP)

2025 Woodlane Dr
St Paul, MN 55125-2998
651 731-2944
651 731-0410 Fax
E-mail: CoA-OMP@jcahpo.org

(Ophthalmic medical technologist programs are designated with an asterisk in the program listings.)