



Early Decision Qualification:

What is an Early Decision applicant?

With more and more students deciding on careers in high school and even middle school, Early Decision is becoming a more favorable option. Being accepted as an Early Decision applicant affords many benefits. If you are motivated and know optometry is what you want to do, start your planning in high school and be on track to apply using this option.

Early Decision is a term used to describe an applicant who plans to complete a bachelor's degree—though it is not a prerequisite requirement to do so—and who applies to optometry school after his or her sophomore year in undergrad, and therefore one year early. To be an Early Decision applicant, you would have demonstrated a commitment to optometry as your chosen profession before starting undergrad and preferably as early as high school.

Early Decision applicants must qualify to go through the admissions process a year early. In order to qualify as an Early Decision Applicant, you must meet ALL of the following requirements:

- May apply to **ONLY** one optometry program.
- If accepted, be required to submit a non-refundable \$1500 deposit to reserve a seat in the class that would begin up to two years later.
- Be on track to take the OAT before April 1st of one's junior year in undergrad. To do this, it would be necessary to have completed all courses for subjects covered on the OAT: general biology, general physics, general chemistry and organic chemistry.
- Must be on track to complete an undergrad degree with a conferred-date that precedes the start of fall classes at SCCO, which is late in the 2nd week in August.

I need an additional semester to complete my bachelor's degree, taking 4.5 years instead of the customary 4. Can I still apply as an early decision applicant?

No. An early decision applicant is a traditional student, meaning that they are completing undergrad in 4 years.

Is Early Decision the same as a deferred acceptance?

Early Decision is not the same as a deferred acceptance. Deferred acceptance is when a student applies in an admissions cycle and then defers their acceptance for an entire year. SCCO does not offer deferred acceptance as an option.

What are the benefits of applying Early Decision?

A current SCCO student who successfully applied as an Early Decision applicant explains why she exercised this option:

“SCCO was my number one choice; therefore, I decided to apply as an Early Decision applicant. I was accepted as an Early Decision applicant, I enjoyed several advantages that I would not have otherwise enjoyed:

- I went on a medical mission trip in my senior year because I wasn't tied down due to the interview process (i.e. getting application components submitted, being available to interview, responding to follow-up correspondence...etc.).
- Had more time to make moving/living arrangements.
- Had time to take courses I was afraid I wouldn't have time for (i.e. design and music).
- Changed my attention from optometry to other clubs, activities, and volunteering that I put on hold while I was applying.
- I was still on campus and available to help others who were applying to optometry school.
- I saved a lot of money not having to apply to different schools since I had received an acceptance to my number one school of choice.

Overall, it was a great weight off my shoulders. I spent my senior year looking forward to what I would do in optometry school rather than waiting around for interviews and applications.”

How do I apply as an Early Decision Applicant?

OptomCAS, the centralized application service utilized by SCCO, does not have a designation for early decision; however, you may apply through OptomCAS as an early decision applicant. Complete the online OptomCAS application and then, email a letter addressed to the Admissions Policy Committee at ODadmissions@ketchum.edu stating your intentions to apply Early Decision. Also, include a brief explanation as to why you feel you qualify as an early decision applicant.

If you have any questions about whether you meet qualifications to be an early decision applicant, please send them to us at ODadmissions@ketchum.edu

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