



### ***Opting Not to Complete a Bachelor's Degree Before Optometry School:***

#### **What are the pros and cons of electing not to complete a bachelor's degree before optometry school?**

To be considered for admission to SCCO's professional OD program, either a four-year baccalaureate degree or completing a minimum of 90 semester/135 quarter units of undergraduate study will qualify an applicant for admission.

Points to consider should you decide to enter optometry school without completing a bachelor's degree:

- Forego expenses related to completing the last term of undergrad (i.e. tuition, cost of living expenses, health care insurance...etc.)
- For each sequential year in optometry school tuition increases incrementally, so starting a year earlier will reduce these costs
- Completing an OD degree one year earlier means:
  - You will be a wage earner as an optometrist one year earlier
  - You may begin your personal life one year sooner should including plans such as marriage / family
- Having an OD degree and not a bachelor's degree would not interfere with the pursuit of further graduate education such as a master's degree or PhD
- The OD degree is considered a terminal degree; for your professional title, it will exceed importance of either a BS or BA degree:
  - As an optometrist with a bachelor's degree, your title becomes John Doe, OD and not John Doe, BS, OD
  - For example, if you complete a graduate degree such as a master's degree or a PhD, your title would then become John Doe, OD, PhD
- Very few optometry schools require a bachelor's degree; the ones that do are typically public institutions whose administration requires a bachelor's degree to advance in their institution to graduate level studies, optometry being an example of such
- Should you have successful academic performance in undergrad and solid OAT scores, having a bachelor's degree will not make you any more competitive as an applicant to SCCO's program

**Will I be considered a less competitive applicant if I do not complete a bachelor's degree?**  
The answer is "No."

**Will I be less competitive when in the interview if I do not complete a bachelor's degree?**  
The answer is "No."

**Will not having a bachelor's degree make me a less competitive applicant for an optometric residency program?**

The answer is "No."

**Will not having a bachelor's degree be problematic when I seek employment as an optometrist?**

Many optometrists currently practicing do not have bachelor's degrees, so in general, the answer is "No."

**Is a bachelor's degree required to apply for SCCO's Master of Vision Science program?**

Yes, it is. Because this program accepts international students, a bachelor's degree is required.

**Will not having a bachelor's degree be problematic if I decide to seek other options for employment such as consulting, private industry, or in research?**

What comes into consideration more for these positions is having a graduate degree, either a master's degree or PhD and not a bachelor's degree.

**Will not having a bachelor's degree be problematic if I decide to seek positions of leadership in organized optometry, such as the American Optometric Association?**

The answer is "No."

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