

Optometrists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Contents

1. What Would I Do?	2
2. Am I Suited For This Job?.....	3
3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?	3
4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?	4
5. How do I become an Optometrist	5
6. How Do I Find A Job?	7
7. Applying for a Job	10
8. Where Can This Job Lead?.....	11
9. Where Can I Find More Information?.....	11

Optometrists [NOC 2021: 31111/ NOC 2016: 3121]

Optometrists may also be called:

- OD (Doctor of Optometry)

1. What Would I Do?

Optometrists examine eyes, prescribe and fit eyeglasses and contact lenses. They recommend treatments such as exercises to correct vision problems or eye disorders Duties may include:

- examine patients' eyes, conduct tests and use ophthalmoscopes, biomicroscopes and other specialized instruments to assess visual health
- prescribe treatment (excluding surgery) to maintain, improve and correct vision and other visual disorders
- prescribe and fit eyeglasses and contact lenses
- advise patients on contact lens use and care, visual hygiene, preventive care and maintenance, lighting arrangements, working distances and safety factors
- refer patients to ophthalmologists or other physicians and surgeons for treatment of optical or other diseases or conditions
- some optometrists may specialize in fitting visual aids for people who are partially blind, fitting contact lenses or correcting special vision problems.

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Optometrists**

<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers> [search Optometrists]

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Optometrists should be:

- *able to work independently*
- *patient*
- *good with people*

They should have:

- *good communication skills*
- *some business training*

Optometrists work in offices and treatment rooms; some may work evenings and weekends

Sources:

- **WorkBC**
- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Optometrist')
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

WorkBC reports that in British Columbia the **median** annual salary for Optometrists is approximately \$73,717.

JobBank Canada reports that Optometrists usually earn between \$32,959.00/year and \$135,876.00/year in British Columbia.

Salaried optometrists generally receive benefits, including paid sick days and vacation time, dental coverage, and a pension plan. Self-employed optometrists must provide their own benefits.

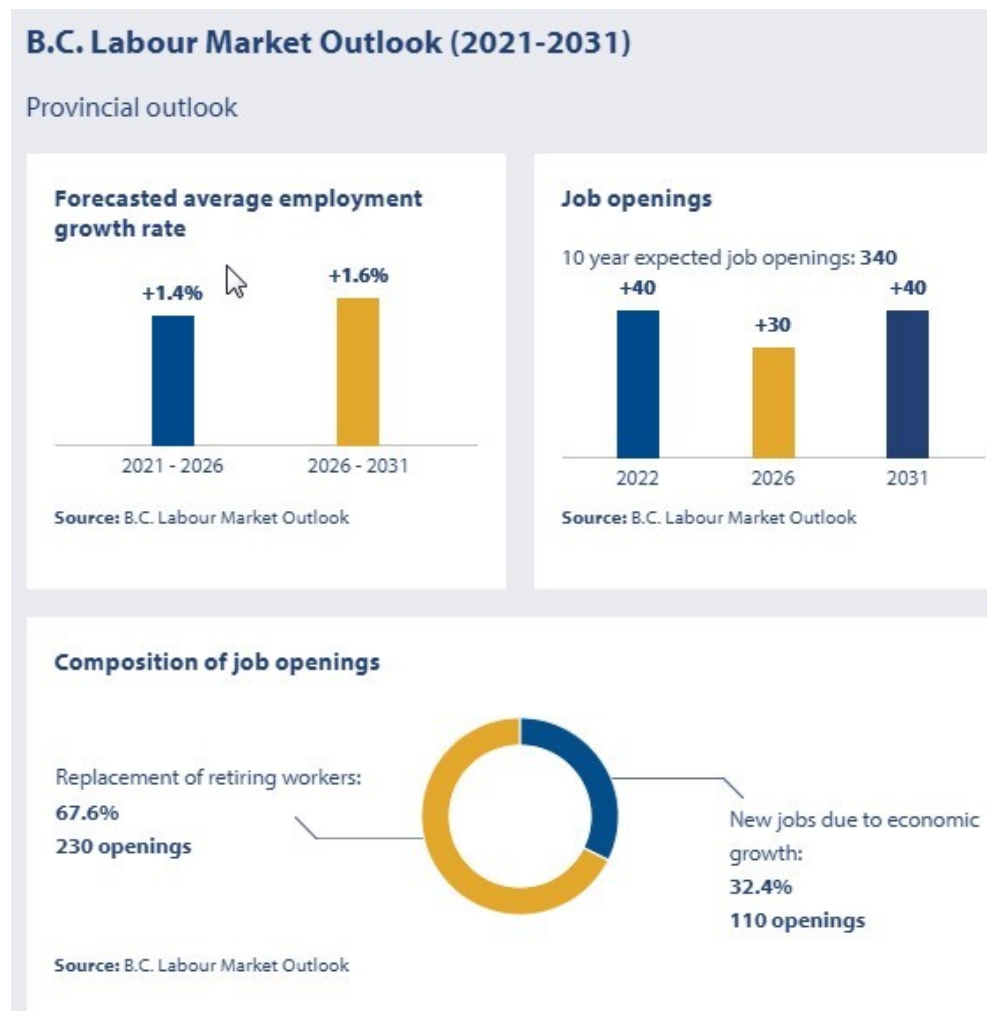
Sources:

- **WorkBC**
- **Career Cruising** database
- **Job Bank Canada**

<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/marketreport/wages-occupation/18193/BC>

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

Employment Outlook for Optometrists



WorkBC provides regional employment outlooks for these regions:

- Mainland/Southwest (Vancouver region): projecting 1.6% average annual employment growth for 2021-2031 with 190 job openings (2021-2031)
- Vancouver Island/Coast: projecting 1.7% average annual employment growth for 2021-2031 with 50 job openings (2021-2031)
- Thompson Okanagan: projecting 1.2% average annual employment growth for 2021-2031 with 70 job openings (2021-2031)

JobBank Canada reports that the employment outlook will be good for Optometrists in British Columbia for the 2021-2023 period.

Sources:

- **WorkBC**
- **JobBank Canada: Job Market Report**
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/search-job-profile>

5. How do I become an Optometrist

Education:

- three years* of university undergraduate studies in sciences and mathematics (*however, most applicants for optometry programs hold a 4-year Bachelor of Science degree)

And

- four-year university program in optometry -- only two programs in Canada:
 - University of Waterloo, School of Optometry & Vision Science
(<https://uwaterloo.ca/optometry-vision-science/>)
 - Université de Montréal, École d'Optométrie
(<https://www.opto.umontreal.ca/>)

Registration / Licensing:

In B.C. the **College of Optometrists of British Columbia** guides and regulates all optometrists registered in British Columbia. To be licensed to practice optometry, the optometrist must complete his/her education and specialized training at a university based school of optometry, successfully pass a national exam (the 'jurisprudence examination') and become registered ["licensed"] with the College of Optometrists of BC

- **College of Optometrists of BC**

- <https://optometrybc.com/>

- <https://optometrybc.com/for-the-public/about-optometrists/>

- <https://optometrybc.com/practicing-in-bc/registration/>

- <https://optometrybc.com/practicing-in-bc/registration/new-graduates/>

Internationally Trained Optometrists:

You are required to successfully complete the Advanced Standing Optometry Preparatory Program (ASOPP) at the University of Waterloo and pass the College of Optometrists of BC Jurisprudence Examination. You will need to contact FORAC Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) for assessment of credentials. For more information see:

- **College of Optometrists of BC**

- <https://optometrybc.com/practicing-in-bc/registration/internationally-trained-students/>

- **University of Waterloo, Advanced Standing Optometry Preparatory Program ASOPP**

- <https://uwaterloo.ca/advanced-standing-optometry-preparatory-program/>

- **Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada FORAC**

- <https://www.forac-faroc.ca/international-applicants/applying-in-english/>

- **Canadian Association of Optometrists**

- <https://opto.ca/becoming-a-doctor-of-optometry>

Source: WorkBC

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

- *work in private practice, clinics and community health centres*
- *department or optical stores, hospitals, or manufacturers of safety glasses*
- *may work in partnerships with other optometrists or ophthalmologists*

Upon graduation optometrists work as associates in an existing practice before buying in as partners, buying another practice or setting up a new practice. Established optometrists usually work in private practice and own or co-own their practices. They may also own or work from more than one location, known as “satellite” offices.

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **BC Doctors of Optometry, 'Optomart'**
https://members.optometrists.bc.ca/bcao/BCAOMember/BCAOMember/Optomart/looking_for_employment.aspx [Doctors of Optometry seeking employment in British Columbia]
<https://members.optometrists.bc.ca/bcao/BCAOMember/optomart/BCAOMember/Optomart/optomart.aspx> [provides Practice Opportunities within Lower Mainland and outside Lower Mainland]

- **Canadian Association of Optometrists – CAO**
<https://opto.ca/job-board>
- **Jobs4ECPs**
<https://www.jobs4ecps.ca/>
- **Indeed.ca**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
<https://ca.indeed.com/Optometrist-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
<https://ca.indeed.com/Eye-Optometry-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>
- **WorkBC**
<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>
- **BC Jobs.ca**
<https://www.bcjobs.ca/>

Finding “Hidden Jobs”

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you *with finding jobs in this “hidden” job market.*

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who are in this industry. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **BC Doctors of Optometry (BC Association of Optometrists)**
<https://bc.doctorsofoptometry.ca/find-a-doctor>
- **College of Optometrists of British Columbia**
<https://cdobcv6.alinityapp.com/Client/PublicDirectory>
- **Reference Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on “Start Search” beside Canadian Businesses, then select the “Advanced Search” button. Select both “Keyword/SIC/NAICS” under Business Type and “City” under Geography. In the top search box enter “optometrist” and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings, e.g. “optometrists OD”. Lower down,

select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**

<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

- **GoVolunteer.ca**

<https://govolunteer.ca/>

- **Third World Eye Society Canada – TWECS**

a local BC chapter of VOSH - Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity

<https://www.twecs.ca/posts-grid> [primarily sponsors eye health care projects outside Canada]

<https://www.twecs.ca/eyeglassrecycling.php> [local individuals needed to recycle eyeglasses]

- **Canadian Vision Care**

<https://www.canadianvisioncare.com/> [From web updates to going on a mission, to packing boxes or organizing projects]

- **Canadian Red Cross**

<https://www.redcross.ca/volunteer>

Volunteering in Health Care Facilities

The following organizations accept volunteers in hospitals, residential care facilities, adult day centres, and other community settings.

- **Vancouver Coastal Health**

<https://www.vch.ca/en/about-us/get-involved/volunteer>

Fraser Health Authority

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer-opportunities>

- **Providence Health Care**

<https://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

With experience, optometrists may progress to Associate Optometrist and potentially to owner of an optometric practice.

Source:

- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Optometrist')
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **College of Optometrists of British Columbia**
<https://optometrybc.com/>
- **Canadian Association of Optometrists – CAO**
<https://opto.ca/>
<https://opto.ca/becoming-a-doctor-of-optometry>
- **BC Doctors of Optometry**
<https://bc.doctorsofoptometry.ca/>
- **University of Waterloo Optometry & Vision Science: Careers in Optometry**
<https://uwaterloo.ca/optometry-vision-science/future-optometry-students/about-optometry-program/careers-optometry>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.



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