

**University of Alabama at Birmingham
School of Optometry**

**ON-SITE RESIDENCY
PROGRAM INFORMATION
2025-2026**

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I. Introduction

Consistent with its educational mission, the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry (UABSO) places significant emphasis on residency education. UABSO strives to develop, maintain, advance, and promote post-doctoral clinical training programs of excellence in the major areas of optometric care. In so doing, the School serves as a leader in residency education.

The School began its first residency program in 1978, and 470 optometrists have completed UABSO residencies to date. Currently, eight residency programs offer a total of sixteen residency positions. All of the residency programs are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association (www.theacoe.org 243 N. Lindbergh Blvd, Suite 301, St. Louis, MO 63141). All residency programs utilize the ORMatch Residency Matching Service for application.

On-Site Residencies

- Primary Care Optometry (1 position)
- Pediatric Optometry (1 position)
- Cornea and Contact Lenses (1 position)

External/Affiliated Residencies

- Ocular Disease with emphasis in Primary Care Optometry and Retina at the Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center (2 positions)
- Vision Rehabilitation with emphasis in Low Vision Rehabilitation and Ocular Disease at the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center (2 positions)
- Ocular Disease at Omni Eye Services of Atlanta (4 positions)
- Ocular Disease with emphasis in Refractive and Ocular Surgery at Eye Center of Texas (4 positions)
- Pediatric Optometry at Vanderbilt Eye Institute (1 position)

II. Administrative Structure

Each residency program has a Supervisor who serves as a mentor for the resident and is responsible for the daily functioning and clinical activities of that particular program. These Residency Supervisors report to the Director of Residency Programs. The Director of Residency Programs is responsible for the coordination of all activities related to the administration of these programs. The Director of Residency Programs reports to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and through him/her to the Dean of UABSO. A Residency Advisory Committee advises the Dean through the Director of Residency Programs about such issues as the selection of new programs or other issues for which the Dean seeks advice in regards to residency education. In the event of an extended leave greater than typical vacation or holiday of one of the in-house Residency Supervisors, the Director of Residency Programs will serve as the administrative and educational support for that program. In the event of extended leave greater than typical vacation or holiday of the Director of Residency Programs, then the Associate Dean for

Academic Affairs will assume the responsibilities related to coordination of all activities and administration of the residency programs.

III. Recruitment of Residents

UABSO has committed a significant amount of its resources to residency education. Optometry students at UABSO provide part of the national pool of applicants to residencies. These students need to be made aware of the value of residency training and the availability of residency programs. Faculty need to be educated and involved in residency programs.

The Director of Residency Programs speaks to students at UABSO multiple times throughout the year regarding residency programs. Each fall, a Residency Information Event is hosted for all classes to attend to provide information on UABSO residency programs and its affiliates as well as residency education in general. To facilitate the placement of graduates into residencies, the Director of Residency Programs regularly distributes information about programs to all fourth year students. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the Director of Residency Programs and with other faculty members to discuss the benefits of pursuing a residency as well as specific programs which would be of interest. The ASCO website (www.opted.org), along with its on-line directory of residency programs, is also promoted as an up-to-date source of general information on all available optometric residencies. The UABSO website residency pages are a useful source of information for potential applicants (www.uab.edu/optometryresident).

A residency brochure has been developed and is digitally sent in the Fall to each school and college of optometry for distribution to every fourth year student. Additionally, a hard copy of the brochure is given to prospective applicants at the AOSA and AAO meetings. This brochure describes, in general terms, the on-site and external residencies of UABSO.

IV. Application to Residencies

All residency programs utilize the ORMatch residency matching service. Admission eligibility criteria include:

- Applicant must comply with all ORMatch procedures and submit an ORMatch application by the ORMatch deadline with all supporting documentation (statement of interest, curriculum vitae, official optometry school transcripts, copy of full NBEO score report, and at least three letters of recommendation) by the deadline as described at www.natmatch.com/ormatch/.
- Applicant must have earned an O.D. degree, or will have earned such a degree by the time of matriculation, from an Accreditation Council on Optometric Education accredited school or college of optometry.

- Applicant must have passed parts I, II, and III of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry.
- Applicant must have a valid United States social security number at the time of application.
- An interview by the committee with each applicant may be required.
- The University of Alabama at Birmingham affirms that all residency applicants are evaluated without regard to sex, race, color, creed, national origin, or non-disqualifying physical disability.

V. Selection of Residents

Prospective residents are encouraged to visit the program before the application deadline. Selection of residents for on-site programs is initially made by each Residency Supervisor. After ranking selections for each program, the selections are presented to the Residency Advisory Committee. The Residency Supervisors, Director of Residency Programs, and other committee members reach a consensus opinion and rank order the choices. The recommendation for resident selection then goes to the Dean, who has final responsibility for approval of the ranked list which is submitted to ORMatch.

Once the ORMatch match results are announced, the appropriate Residency Supervisor may telephone or e-mail the successful residency applicant to notify him/her of the decision to admit. A contract is then mailed for signature. The contract details the conditions of employment and is signed by the Director of Residency Programs and the Dean. The contract must be signed and returned by the applicant within a specified period of time.

All records related to residency application and selection are filed in the office of the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs.

VI. Orientation

Orientation is conducted over two days at the beginning of the residency year. On one of these two days, each resident is oriented to UAB policies and procedures by the Office of Human Resource Management. Since UAB considers residents full-time temporary employees, they are entitled to certain UAB benefits, including health benefits. All information covered during UAB New Employee Orientation, including benefits, can be reviewed over the internet at <https://www.uab.edu/humanresources/home/benefits>. On the other day, each resident is oriented to UABSO residency policies and procedures. In addition to being oriented to the Residency Manual and the UABSO Clinic Procedures and Policies Manual (which includes infection control and facility safety policies and the UABSO Clinic Compliance Plan) (available on the UAB Eye Care Canvas webpage), the residents are informed that the Optometric Clinical Practice Guidelines of the American Optometric Association (available on the UAB Eye Care Canvas webpage and online at www.aoa.org [AOA Optometric Clinical Practice Guidelines](#)) are used as clinical practice protocols for the residency.

VII. Resident Status

A resident is a full-time temporary employee of UABSO. The current annual salary for a resident is \$55,000 plus benefits as presented during UAB New Employee Orientation. The resident's salary is not contingent upon productivity of the resident. A limited license is required and will be issued by the Alabama State Board of Optometry on certification of admission by the Dean, payable by the resident. Residents are covered with regard to professional liability insurance by the University Professional Liability Trust Fund, payable by UABSO. This insurance also covers action taken subsequent to the residency for acts that occurred during the residency which were undertaken as part of the training program. Residents are supplied with a clinic coat. Laundering of clinic coats is provided by UABSO at no cost to the resident. Each resident is reimbursed up to \$600 in travel expenses for optometric meetings. The availability of additional resources is presented in the Resident's Guide to Resources in Research and Scholarship.

The 2025-2026 residency program is 54 weeks in duration, commencing in June one week before the start of the second summer session and ending in June on the last day of the first summer session. Two weeks (ten working days) of leave may be granted with prior approval of the Supervisor of the appropriate residency and the Director of Residency Programs. UAB holidays are listed at <https://www.uab.edu/humanresources/home/benefits/time-off/holidays>, and the severe weather policy is available in the Henry Peters Building Emergency Plan/UAB Eye Care Safety Policy which can be viewed on the UAB Eye Care Canvas webpage.

Each resident is expected to participate in residency activities 40 hours per week. He/she is also expected to provide emergency coverage for the clinic during day, night, and weekend hours on a rotating basis. Outside employment in optometry ("moonlighting") by the resident during the residency is not allowed.

VIII. Criteria for Residency Completion

When a resident successfully completes the training program, the Director of Residency Programs recommends to the Dean the granting of a certificate. Criteria for residency completion include:

- The resident is required to deliver clinical services at a level which is satisfactory to the faculty member in charge, the Residency Advisory Committee, and the administration.
- The resident is required to keep a record of patient encounters. Cases are reviewed periodically by the Residency Supervisor.
- The resident is required to write a paper based on original research, literature review, or a clinical case or case series suitable for publication in a refereed ophthalmic journal.
- The resident is expected to perform in a professional manner in the delivery of patient care services and to observe those proprieties of conduct and courtesies that are consistent with the rules and regulations governing the clinics of the School.
- The resident is required to participate in and complete the requirements set forth in the curriculum.

IX. Adverse Decisions and Complaints

Any resident accepted for training can be dismissed, without receiving a certificate of completion, for infractions of the rules and regulations which govern UABSO or for any action which jeopardizes the safety of patients, personnel, or physical facilities. UAB policy regarding termination of employment is available at <https://www.uab.edu/humanresources/home/policies>. UAB grievance procedure, including due process provided to the resident on adverse decisions, is also available at <https://www.uab.edu/humanresources/home/policies>.

It is anticipated that most complaints from residents can be resolved without a grievance being filed in the Office of Human Resource Management. A resident with a complaint should first attempt to resolve the issue with the other involved party. If this step is not successful, then he/she should approach the appropriate Residency Supervisor. If this step is not successful, then he/she should approach the Director of Residency Programs. If this step is not successful, then he/she should approach the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. If this step is not successful, then he/she should approach the Dean. All records related to resident complaints are filed in the office of the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs.

Counseling or remediation of the resident, when needed, is arranged by the appropriate Residency Supervisor. When counseling or remediation cannot be satisfactorily accomplished at this level, then the Director of Residency Programs, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and ultimately the Dean may become involved in the process.

X. Curriculum

It is desirable that the curriculum for all UABSO residency programs be very clinically oriented. The residents are involved in direct patient care approximately four and one-half days per week. The remainder of the residents' time is devoted to such academic interests as conferences, symposia, case presentations and discussion, and/or research. Residents spend 40 hours per week in the School but are expected to be available for rotating emergency coverage after-hours. The residency duration for 2025-2026 is 54 weeks.

Residency Conference

Residency Conference takes place on Wednesday mornings from July through May. During the first several weeks, topics of general interest are covered in order to achieve a relatively equal common knowledge base. In addition to these core topics, a series of topics germane to the various specialty areas is presented throughout the year.

Scheduling

The schedule has been designed with maximum utilization of space and the resident's time in mind. It is desirable that the residents gain clinical experience in such outside facilities as VisionAmerica of Birmingham, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, and others. The residents also spend a significant portion of their time in the clinical services of UABSO. Regardless of where the resident is located on a particular day, all residents provide direct patient care.

Clinical Grand Rounds

It is required that the residents participate in grand rounds. Specifically, the resident is required to present patients periodically to students, residents, and clinical faculty. This aspect of the program rotates between UABSO, Birmingham VAMC, and Tuscaloosa VAMC.

Journal Club

All residents are required to attend and participate in the journal club. In the journal club, residents select papers to be discussed in terms of the overall content, research design, and results. This serves to familiarize the residents with the current literature and various aspects of research methodologies.

Paper for Publication

All residents are required to write a paper suitable for publication in a refereed ophthalmic journal. This paper may be a unique or unusual case report, a case series, clinical review, or original research. This serves not only to teach residents the elements of research and paper writing but also to enrich the optometric literature.

Clinical Teaching Experience

Each resident provides at least 6 half days of clinical teaching during the first summer session at the conclusion of the residency year. In addition, some residents participate in various clinical teaching aspects in clinical methods and procedures, contact lenses and pediatric optometry. Residents may also be invited to present specific topics to optometrists and/or paraoptometricians as part of continuing education programs.

XI. Credentials and Privileges

The resident is allowed an increasing level of independence in diagnosis and management as the residency year progresses, with supervision close at the beginning and relaxed over time. Although each resident presents credentials and receives privileges identical to those of faculty members, a faculty member is always available for consultation when patient care is rendered by a resident during regular clinic hours and after hours when the resident is on-call.

Although consultation with faculty members is encouraged, the resident has primary responsibility for providing each patient's care. Independence is stressed so that the resident can develop self-reliance and confidence as a clinician. However, resident-provided care is appropriately supervised especially at the beginning of each year by direct observation of clinical skills by the supervisor or other faculty, patient consultation as needed, meetings between the supervisor and the resident, and meetings with other faculty. These activities help to ensure adequate patient care quality as well as appropriate residency supervision and education.

Each resident's clinical competency is evaluated and approved in a graduated manner with three levels of supervision. The residency supervisor will make a determination on the level of supervision based on the individual competency of each resident. The level of supervision approved will be documented in writing by the residency supervisor and shared with the resident.

Level 1 This represents entry level for all residents. During the first two weeks of the program, the resident will observe patient care with the outgoing resident and with assigned clinical faculty instructors. After the first two weeks, residents will directly examine patients and formulate differential diagnoses and management strategies. The attending doctor will verify the resident's findings to ensure the accuracy of the diagnosis and

treatment plan. The attending doctor must sign off on all resident exams during this period. Each resident will also receive training in pre- and postoperative management of cataract and refractive surgery patients within the first semester of the program. It is anticipated that each resident will be prepared to progress to the 2nd level of supervision after one month of interacting with patients and the attending doctors.

Level 2 This level of supervision permits residents to discuss routine cases without the physical examination of every patient by an attending doctor. More complex cases will require an attending doctor to physically examine the patient. It is anticipated that each resident will be prepared to progress to the 3rd level of supervision by the time of the Fall resident evaluation.

Level 3 This level of supervision permits residents to serve as an attending or co-attending doctor in the clinical service supervising 3rd or 4th year interns.

Supervision of residents is also dependent upon Alabama licensure and receipt of insurance company provider numbers, especially during the early part of the program. Residents provide clinical services in accordance with the statutory provisions of the state of Alabama. Accordingly, services include the independent use of topical and oral medications, including certain controlled substances. Co-management of patients is undertaken for clinical services that fall outside the current scope of practice.

The following guidelines apply to each resident:

- Until the resident obtains an Alabama license, he/she cannot examine patients independently. During this time, the patient record must be signed by, and insurance claim filed under, a licensed attending with a provider number. This attending must also see the patient and repeat key elements of the exam.
- With an Alabama license but no provider number, the resident can legally examine a patient and sign the chart but cannot file a claim for third party reimbursement. It must be filed by a licensed attending with a provider number. This attending must also see the patient and sign the patient record.
- With an Alabama license and a provider number, the resident can function independently, examining the patient, signing the chart, and filing a claim for third party reimbursement.

XII. Physical Facilities and Equipment

The resident clinical areas in UABSO serve as both operatories and offices. Each operatory is fully equipped in order to maximize clinical efficiency. The Worrell Conference Room in the clinic serves as the primary location of Residency Conference.

XIII. Faculty and Staff

The cost of educational support for the residencies is borne by UABSO. It is anticipated that residencies require involvement of approximately 70% of the UAB School of Optometry faculty for participation either in the didactic portion of the program or in direct clinical consultation.

In order to ensure clinical and administrative efficiency, staff support is provided to the residencies in the following areas: secretarial, customer service representative, and technician/clinic coordinator. Secretarial support is provided by the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs. The customer service representative is responsible for greeting patients, preparing the patient registration information, and rescheduling patients. The technician/clinic coordinator is responsible for assisting the resident with special testing and setting up referrals as needed.

XIV. Evaluation

Self-Evaluation

At the beginning of the residency year, each resident should complete a Self-Evaluation of Resident form and submit it to the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs, who will forward a copy to the Director of Residency Programs and to the appropriate Residency Supervisor for review.

Continuing Evaluation

Evaluation of the resident consists of several aspects. These include ongoing and continuing evaluation in which the Residency Supervisor maintains periodic contact with the resident in order to provide informal evaluations with regard to the attainment of personal and program goals.

Patient Encounter Log

All residents are required to keep a complete log of patient encounters. The log is maintained electronically on a secure server. The appropriate Residency Supervisor will review the electronic log at least monthly. At the conclusion of the program, the administrative assistant to the Director of Residency Programs will print out the final log for inclusion in the resident's file.

Evaluations

Three times per year (fall, winter, and spring/final), the Director of Residency Programs provides an Evaluation of Resident form to each Residency Supervisor. Each Supervisor completes this written evaluation, tailored to meet the needs and specific goals set forth by the resident at the beginning of the program and reviews the evaluation with the resident. Once the evaluation has been reviewed with and initialed by the resident, the

Residency Supervisor submits it to the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs, who will forward a copy to the Director of Residency Programs and for review and place the evaluation in the resident's file.

Also three times per year (fall, winter, and spring/final), the Director of Residency Programs provides Evaluation of Residency Supervisor, Evaluation of Residency Faculty, and Evaluation of Residency Program forms to each resident. Each resident completes these written evaluations and submits them to the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs, who will forward a copy to the Director of Residency Programs and to the appropriate Residency Supervisor or Faculty for review. Note that the Evaluation of Residency Faculty form is designed for a resident to use in evaluating all faculty (other than their direct Supervisor) who have played a significant role in the resident's training during that evaluation period.

Final Evaluations

At the conclusion of the spring semester, the Director of Residency Programs also provides an Evaluation of Residency Director form to each resident. Each resident completes this written evaluation and submits it to the Administrative Associate to the Director of Residency Programs, who will forward a copy to the Director of Residency Programs and to the appropriate Residency Supervisor for review.

Near the conclusion of the program, each resident is scheduled for an exit interview. In addition to querying the resident regarding strengths, weaknesses, and need for changes in the program, this interview provides the resident with verbal feedback as to his/her performance.

XV. Mission Statements and Curricula

Residency in Primary Care Optometry

The Residency in Primary Care Optometry provides advanced clinical training to post-graduate optometrists. This residency's comprehensive didactic experience, strong clinical foundation in primary eye care, and flexible system of rotations in other specialty areas of optometry allow residents upon completion of the program to pursue professional opportunities which require a high level of clinical expertise, such as academia or specialty private practice.

Residency in Primary Care Optometry Curriculum

The educational objectives, learning activities, and expected outcomes of the Residency in Primary Care Optometry include the following:

Clinical Activities

1. Provision of optometric care to a large number (at least 1,500 encounters) and diversity of patients with an emphasis in the area of primary eye care and other specialty areas of optometry selected by the resident at the UABSO clinic and other approved external rotation sites near UABSO.
2. Appropriate referral and co-management of patients with other health care providers.
3. Rotations through various external sites. Rotations are intended to stimulate interdisciplinary interaction.
4. Clinical supervision of optometry students during the latter part of the program.

Scholarly Activities

1. Completion of a paper suitable for publication in a refereed ophthalmic journal.
2. Encourage presentation of a poster at a continuing education program or scientific meeting.
3. Selection and presentation of articles in journal club.
4. Presentation of patients in grand rounds and case conference.
5. Presentation of a lecture related to primary care optometry to other residents and faculty during the latter part of the program.
6. Membership in local, state, and national optometric organizations which promote scholarly activity is encouraged.
7. Participation as an instructor in a clinical skills laboratory or course taught to second or third year optometry students is encouraged.
8. Require the resident to select and read 20 manuscripts from the program's required reading list, which includes major landmark studies, most of them sponsored by the NIH-NEI, as well as other notable journal articles in the ophthalmic literature.

Didactic Activities

1. Attendance of weekly Residency Conference covering core topics of broad interest and specialty topics in optometry.
2. Attendance of continuing education courses. UABSO continuing education is free of charge, and the resident is given a \$600 stipend and 10 days of leave to attend other continuing education or scientific meetings.
3. Attendance at UABSO-sponsored continuing education seminars and lectures offered throughout the year is encouraged.
4. Training for certification in the pre- and post-operative care of cataract and refractive surgery patients.

Residency in Cornea and Contact Lenses

The Residency in Cornea and Contact Lenses aims to provide advanced clinical training for post-graduate optometrists, allowing residents completing the program to pursue professional opportunities which require a high level of expertise in the area of cornea and contact lenses such as academia, industry, and specialty private practice.

Residency in Cornea and Contact Lenses Curriculum

The educational objectives, learning activities, and expected outcomes of the Residency in Cornea and Contact Lenses include the following:

Clinical Activities

1. Provision of optometric care to a large number (at least 1,500 encounters) and diversity of patients with an emphasis in the area of cornea and contact lenses at the UABSO clinic and other approved external rotation sites near UABSO.
2. Appropriate referral and co-management of patients with other health care providers.
3. Rotations through various external sites. Rotations are intended to stimulate interdisciplinary interaction. At least two external rotations are focused on cornea and anterior segment care, including refractive surgery.

Scholarly Activities

1. Completion of a paper suitable for publication in a refereed ophthalmic journal.
2. Encourage presentation of a poster at a continuing education program or scientific meeting.
3. Selection and presentation of articles in journal club.
4. Presentation of patients in grand rounds and case conference.
5. Presentation of at least two lectures to students, faculty, residents, and/or practitioners.
6. Clinical supervision of optometry students during the latter part of the program.
7. Organization and participation as an instructor in specialty contact lens educational activities for optometry students at UABSO.

Didactic Activities

1. Attendance of weekly Residency Conference covering core topics of broad interest and specialty topics in cornea and contact lenses.
2. Attendance of continuing education courses. UABSO continuing education is free of charge, and the resident is given a \$600 stipend and 10 days of leave to attend other continuing education or scientific meetings.
3. Participation in the GPLI course for cornea and contact lenses residents at the beginning of the residency year and other industry sponsored workshops throughout the year.

4. Training for certification in the pre- and post-operative care of cataract and refractive surgery patients.

Residency in Pediatric Optometry

The Residency in Pediatric Optometry seeks to provide a specialty post-graduate clinical program of excellence to the highest quality optometric graduates. The program aims to foster exceptional and independent clinicians who will have the opportunity to excel in the areas of patient care, education, and research within pediatric optometry.

Residency in Pediatric Optometry Curriculum

The Residency in Pediatric Optometry is a unique program that aims to foster exceptionally well-rounded, independent, and inquisitive clinicians in many diverse areas of pediatric optometry. Emphasis is placed on direct patient care during the standard work week and on-call hours. There are additional opportunities in research and increasing teaching responsibilities as determined by the skill and preferences of the resident as well as the needs of the Professional Program. Training is divided between management of primary care pediatrics (including a wide range of conditions that affect children aged birth to 18 years old such as amblyopia, refractive conditions, binocular vision disorders, mild traumatic brain injury, congenital conditions with ocular sequelae, and pediatric ocular disease) as well as vision therapy, learning-related vision disorders, and care of the individual with special needs.

The educational objectives, learning activities, and expected outcomes of the Residency in Pediatric Optometry include the following:

1. Provision of care at least two half-days per week in the UAB School of Optometry Pediatric Clinic.
2. Provision of care in specialty clinics inside and outside the UAB Eye Care Pediatric Optometry Clinical Service to develop skills in working in a multidisciplinary setting for children with special needs.
3. Visiting off-campus sites that specialize in the care of children's eyes (such as pediatric ophthalmology) will be encouraged.
4. Acquisition of a therapeutic license.
5. Participation in Residency Conference.
6. Scheduling of specialty rotations such as primary care, contact lens, retina, post-operative, and/or anterior segment will be encouraged.
7. Attendance of Grand Rounds within the Residency Conference series.
8. Attendance of UAB School of Optometry Continuing Education (at no charge) will be encouraged.
9. Provision of after-hours emergency care for the UAB School of Optometry Clinics on a rotating basis with the other in-house residents.
10. Provision of at least one 45-minute or longer formal presentation on a topic approved by the Residency Supervisor.
11. Development of at least one clinical case during grand rounds.
12. Provision of independent clinical instruction to 4th year optometry interns during at least six 4-hour sessions during the residency year.

13. Each resident will present at least one lecture to the student body on a topic chosen by the resident.
14. Participation in lab instruction as determined by the Supervisor, preferences of the Resident, the coursemaster, and the needs of the Professional Program.
15. Submission of a paper of publishable quality.
16. Attendance of clinical visiting scholars presentations will be encouraged.
17. Attendance of journal club at Residency Conference.
18. Participation in research projects with other faculty members will be encouraged when appropriate.