



**Optometry Centralized Application Service  
OptomCAS Applicant Data Report – A National Snapshot  
2015-2016**

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Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 420  
Rockville, MD 20852

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## Introduction

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OptomCAS is the centralized application service for the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and is administered by Liaison International Inc., an education information technology company located in Watertown, MA. OptomCAS allows optometry applicants to use a single web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple schools and colleges of optometry. Applicants who apply through OptomCAS submit a completed web-based application comprised of biographical data, colleges and universities attended, academic course history, letters of recommendation, work experience, extracurricular activities, honors and a personal essay. It is the applicant's responsibility to read and follow specific instructions for OptomCAS and the schools and colleges of optometry.

OptomCAS began its first year on July 15, 2009 for Admissions Cycle 2009-2010. Since its implementation, all eligible schools and colleges of optometry have participated in the centralized application service. OptomCAS provides validated numbers for the optometry application process.

This report will focus on OptomCAS Cycle 7, which is the Admissions Cycle 2015-2016. This cycle opened on July 1, 2015 and closed on June 2, 2016. The application fee was \$160 for one institution and \$60 for each additional institution.

## Participating Institutions for 2015-2016

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As noted in Table 1, twenty two schools and colleges of optometry participated in OptomCAS in Admissions Cycle 2015-2016.

**Table 1.**

Illinois College of Optometry	Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry
Indiana University School of Optometry	Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University
Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry	Southern College of Optometry
MCPHS University School of Optometry	State University of New York State College of Optometry
Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University	University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry
Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry	University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry
New England College of Optometry	University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry

Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry	University of Houston College of Optometry
Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry
The Ohio State University College of Optometry	University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry
Pacific University College of Optometry	Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry

## OptomCAS Trends

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### Applicants and Applications

The number of OptomCAS individual verified applicants to the twenty two schools and colleges of optometry for 2015-2016 was 2,812. These applicants submitted a total of 13,620 applications for an average of 4.84 applications per applicant. See Table 2 below for a comparison to previous cycles.

**Table 2.**

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Verified Applicants	2,545	2,639	2,604	2,732	2,812
Verified Applications	13,393	13,210	13,164	13,261	13,620
Total Verified Applications per Applicant	5.26	5.01	5.06	4.85	4.84

There was a 2.9% increase in the number of applicants for 2015-2016. The total verified applications increased by 2.7% to an average of 4.84 applications per applicant.

### Offers per Applicant

This table is not available this year, but hopefully will be included in next cycle's final report.

### Designations

The top three designations for applicants to the Doctor of Optometry program were: Illinois College of Optometry, Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry and Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry (reference Table 3). Please note these are OptomCAS applicant numbers and some institutions have a supplemental application that must be completed before an applicant will be considered for their program.

**Table 3.**

<b>State</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Total Applicants</b>	<b>Applicants Denied</b>	<b>Applicants Offered</b>
IL	Illinois College of Optometry	1223	895	328
IN	Indiana University School of Optometry	557	422	135
PR	Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry	268	183	85
MA	MCPHS University School of Optometry	605	496	109
MI	Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University	217	179	65
AZ	Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry	683	549	134
MA	New England College of Optometry	815	478	337
OK	Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry	272	227	45
FL	Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	1131	945	186
OR	Pacific University College of Optometry	573	418	155
PA	Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry	1155	678	477
CA	Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University	642	492	150
TN	Southern College of Optometry	861	709	152
NY	State University of New York State College of Optometry	579	471	108
OH	The Ohio State University College of Optometry	561	458	103
AL	University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry	420	311	109
CA	University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry	264	185	79
TX	University of Houston College of Optometry	650	514	136
MO	University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry	403	309	94
TX	University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry	585	518	67
KY	University Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry	401	307	94
CA	Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry	755	619	136

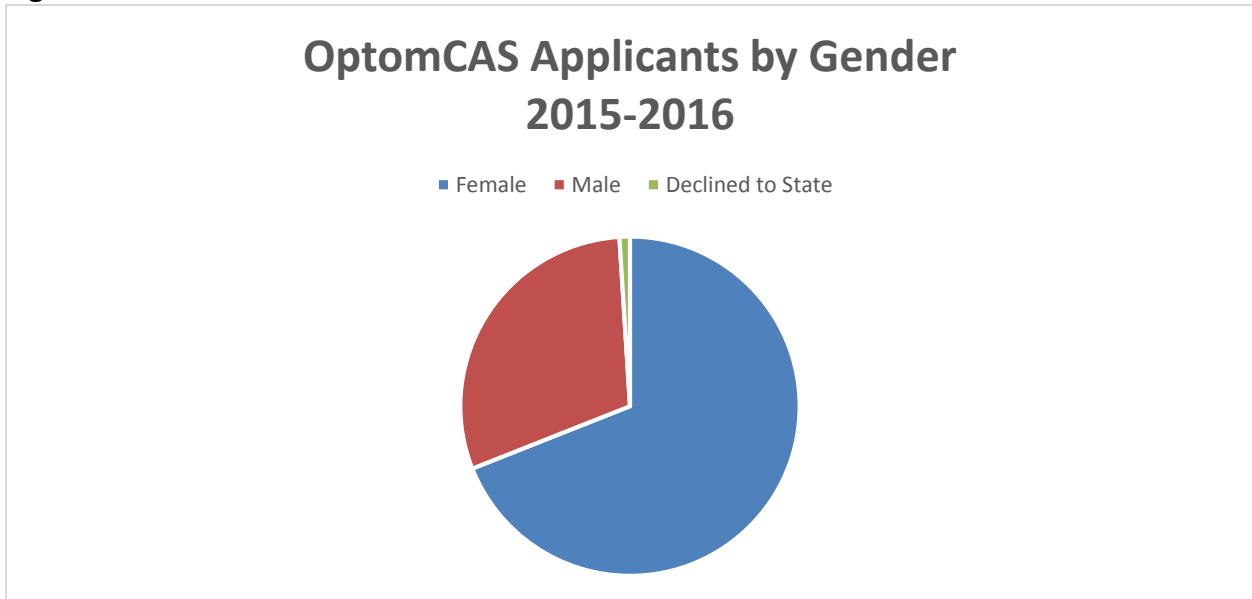
## **Demographic Information on the Doctor of Optometry Applicant**

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OptomCAS demographic data are captured on the OptomCAS application. This information is optional for the applicant to include and cannot be verified by Liaison staff.

## Gender

Figure 1.



As shown in Figure 1, females comprise 70% (1,966) of the OptomCAS applicant pool with males at 30% (836). Less than 1% (10) of the applicant pool Declined to State the gender. These figures remained comparable to the previous OptomCAS admissions cycle.

## Age

Figure 2.

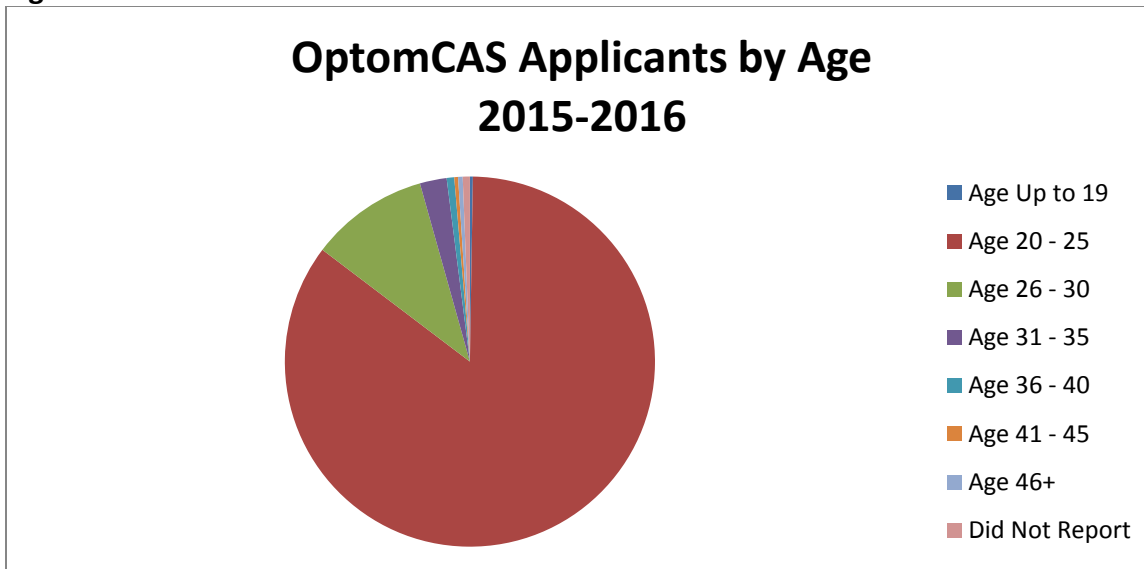
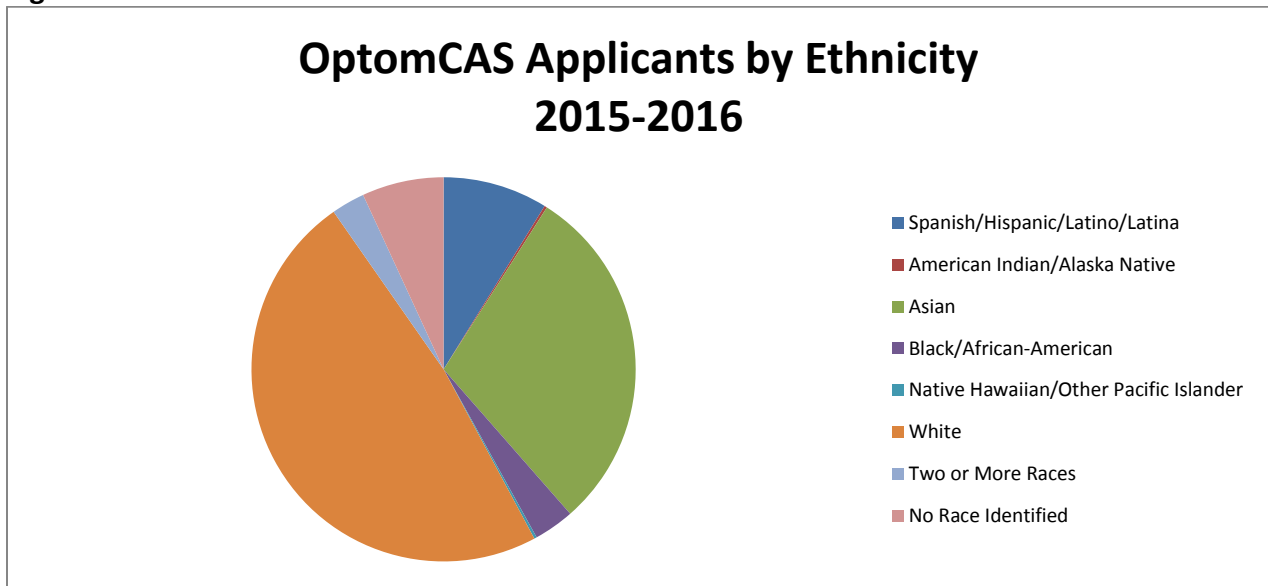


Figure 2 shows that the majority of applicants were in the 20-25 age range. The average age for all applicants was 23.19 with a median age of 22. The youngest applicant was 18 and the oldest was 61. There was a very slight change from the previous OptomCAS admissions cycle regarding the average and median age.

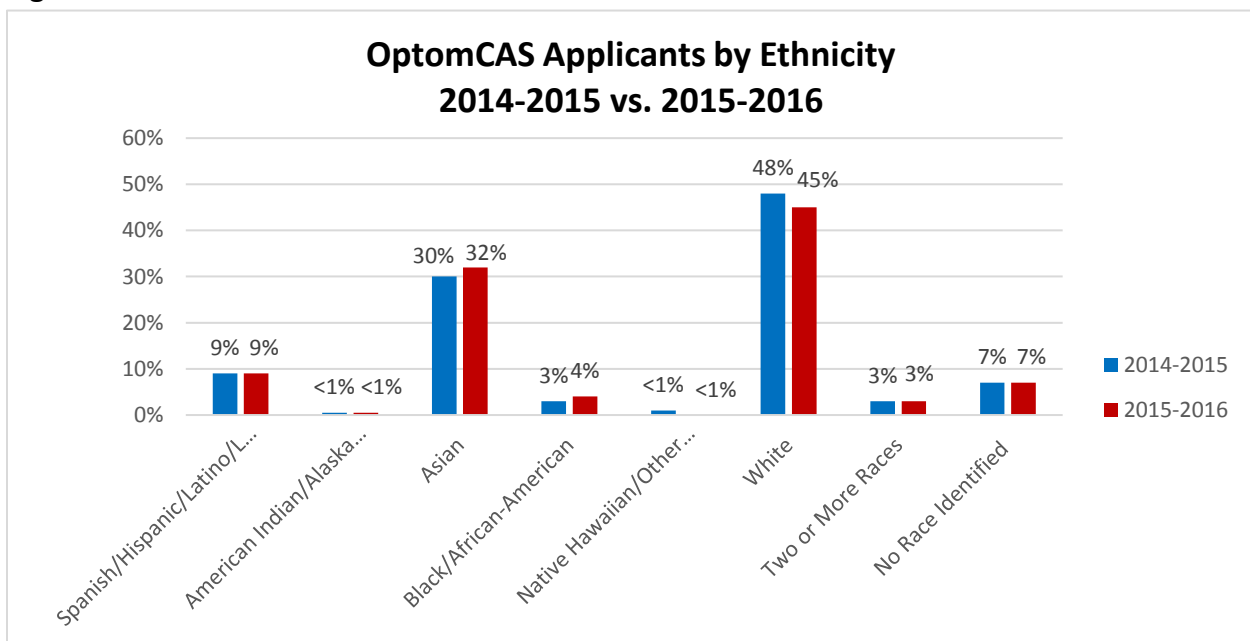
## Ethnicity

Figure 3.



As shown in Figure 3, the majority of applicants were White (45%) with the other applicants reporting Asian (32%); Spanish/Hispanic/Latino/Latina (9%); Black/African-American (4%); Two or More Races (3%); American Indian/Alaska Native (less than 1%); and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (less than 1%). Seven percent of applicants did not report a race.

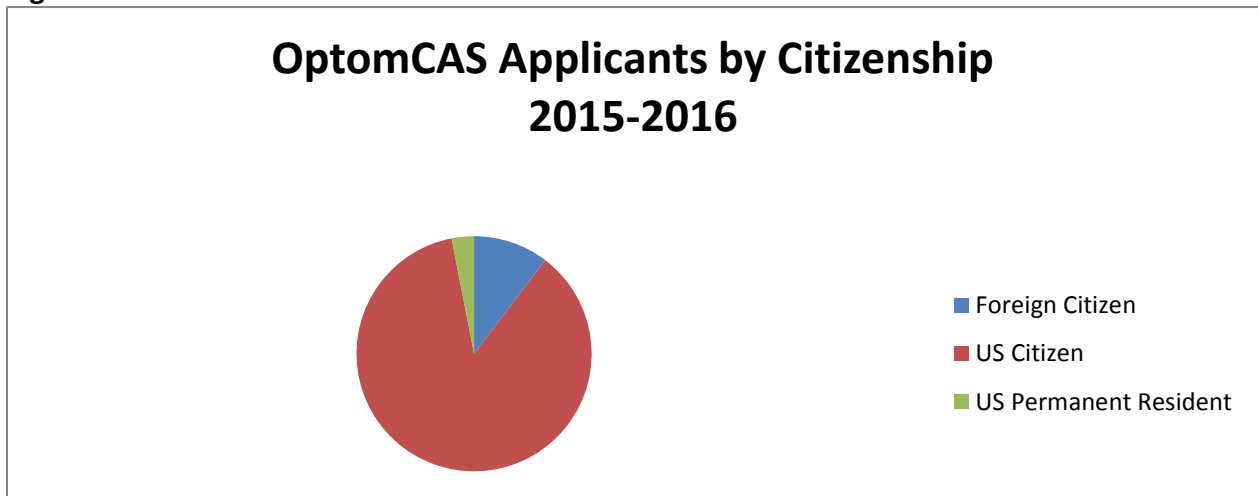
Figure 4.



As shown in Figure 4, there were minor shifts in the ethnicity categories for Cycle 7 from last application cycle with a slight increase in Asian and Black/African American applicants and a decrease in White applicants.

## Citizenship

Figure 5.



As shown in Figure 5, the majority of applicants for 2015-2016 were US citizens at 88%. Nine percent of applicants reported they were foreign citizens and 3% US permanent residents. This was very similar to last year.

## State of Residence

The top five states where OptomCAS applicants claimed their state of residence in 2015-2016 were: California, Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois. There were 223 applicants from Canada. In the 2014-2015 Admissions Cycle, the top five states were: California, Texas, Florida, New York and Pennsylvania and 258 applicants from Canada.

## First Generation College Student

For 2015-2016, 62% of submitted OptomCAS applicants had a parent who has attended/graduated from college, while 30% of applicants are first generation college students. Less than nine percent declined to answer the question. This was similar to last year.

## Military Experience

Less than 1% of OptomCAS applicants had previous military experience, which was the same as the last admissions cycle.



## **Influences**

The top five influences on why an applicant chose to apply to a Doctor of Optometry program are: non-relative optometrist; a parent who is a non-optometrist; relative optometrist; other health professional; and friend. These influences were the same as last admissions cycle.

## **Academic Information on the Doctor of Optometry Applicant**

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### **Major**

The most selected major on the OptomCAS application was Biology. Biology was also the top major last year.

### **Institution**

The University of California higher education system claimed three of the top five spots for feeder institutions for OptomCAS applicants. These institutions are: University of California, Irvine, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Houston, and University of Florida in the fifth spot. In 2014-2015, the top five feeder schools were: University of California, Irvine, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Houston, The Ohio State University and University of California, San Diego.

### **GPA**

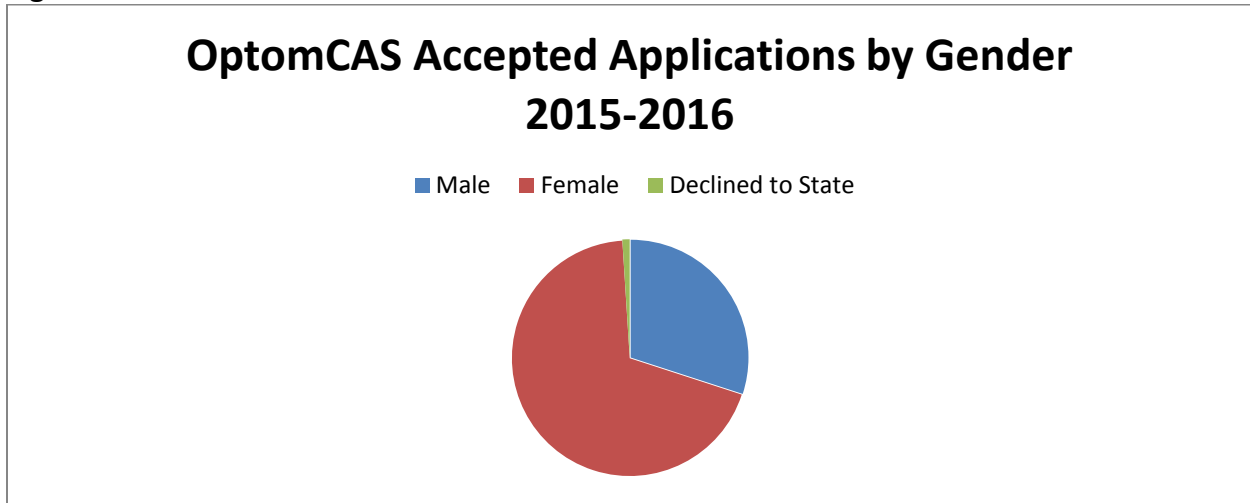
OptomCAS calculates a standardized GPA to aid the schools and colleges of optometry in evaluating applicants using uniform and consistent criteria. The overall cumulative GPA for all applicants was 3.32 – for males it was 3.28 and 3.33 for females. The GPAs were similar in the last admissions cycle – 3.27 for males and 3.34 for females.

## Accepted Profile of the Doctor of Optometry Applicant

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### Gender

Figure 6.



For Admissions Cycle 2015-2016, 71% of accepted applications were female and 29% were male. Less than one-percent declined to state their gender. In Cycle 2014-2015, 69% of accepted applications were female and 30% were male. One-percent declined to state their gender.

### Age

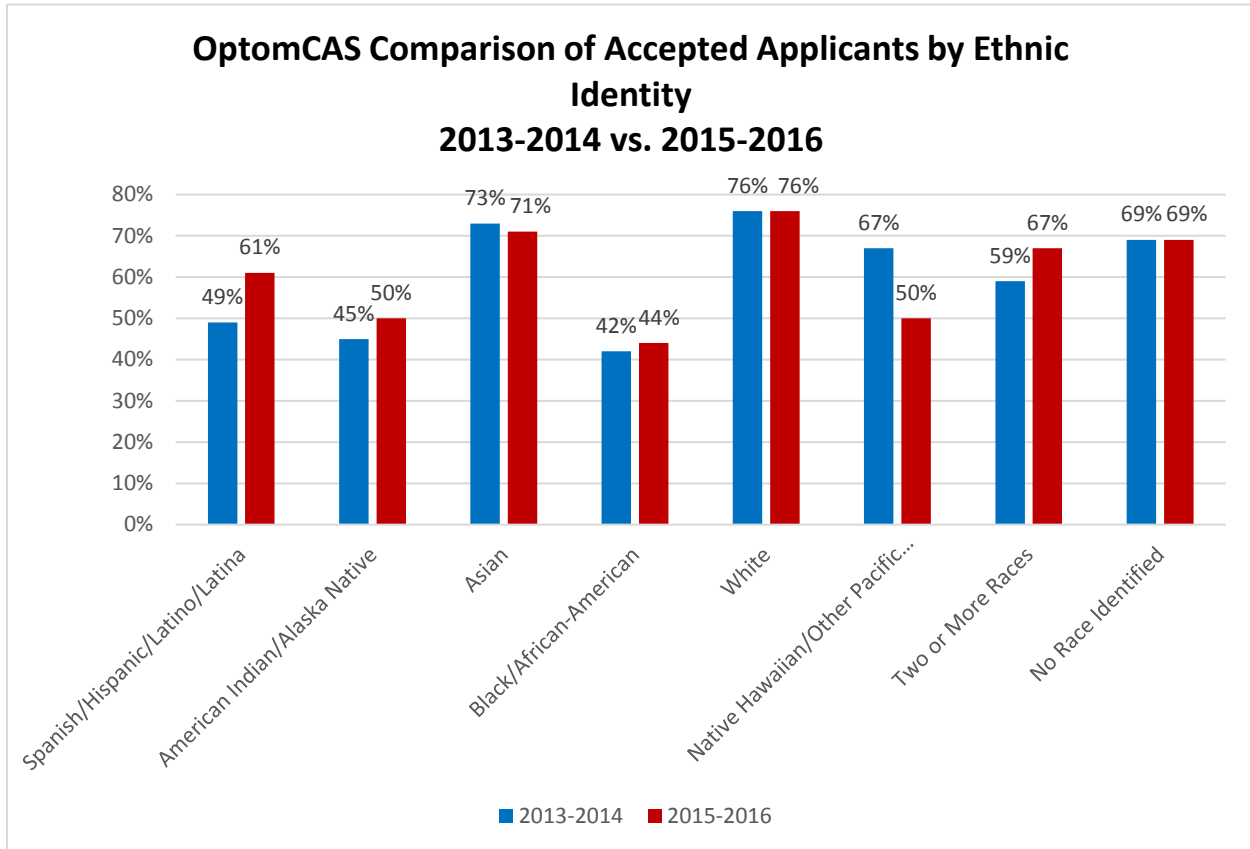
The median age for accepted applicants was 22.5 years old. It was 23 years old last admissions cycle.

### Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 7 below, White and Asian had the highest rate of acceptance at 76% and 71%; followed by No Race Identified at 69%; Two or More Races at 67%; Spanish/Hispanic/Latino/Latina at 61%; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native at 50% and Black/African-American at 44%.

Spanish/Hispanic/Latino/Latina, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African-American and Two or More Races increased the rate of acceptance from 2013-2014. Data for this table was not available for application cycle 2014-2015.

**Figure 7.**



## Citizenship

Eighty-seven percent of applications accepted were US citizens; 10% were foreign applications (this includes Canadian residents); and 3% were permanent residents of the US. In 2014-2015, the breakdown was similar.

## GPA

The average GPA for accepted applications at the twenty two schools and colleges ranged from 3.09 to 3.64.

## More Information

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Please submit any questions or comments you have on the OptomCAS Applicant Data Report – A National Snapshot to:

Paige Pence  
Director, Student and Residency Affairs  
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
6110 Executive Boulevard, Suite 420

Rockville, MD 20852  
[ppence@opted.org](mailto:ppence@opted.org)