



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

**2017-2018**

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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 Admissions Cycle 2017-2018. This cycle opened on June 28, 2017 and closed on June 2, 2018. The application fee was \$170 for one institution and \$70 for each additional institution.

## Participating Institutions for 2017-2018

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As noted in Table 1, twenty-three schools and colleges of optometry participated in OptomCAS in Admissions Cycle 2017-2018.

**Table 1.**

Chicago College of Optometry, Midwestern University	Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry
Illinois College of Optometry	Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University
Indiana University School of Optometry	Southern College of Optometry
Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry	State University of New York State College of Optometry
MCPHS University School of Optometry	University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry
Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University	University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry
Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry	University of Houston College of Optometry
New England College of Optometry	University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg

	School of Optometry
Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry	University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry
Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry
The Ohio State University College of Optometry	Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry
Pacific University College of Optometry	

## OptomCAS Trends

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### Applicants and Applications

The number of OptomCAS individual verified applicants to the twenty-three schools and colleges of optometry for 2017-2018 was 2,527. These applicants submitted a total of 12,293 applications for an average of 4.86 applications per applicant. See Table 2 below for a comparison to previous cycles.

**Table 2.**

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Verified Applicants	2,639	2,604	2,732	2,812	2,687	2,527
Verified Applications	13,210	13,164	13,261	13,620	13,339	12,293
Total Verified Applications per Applicant	5.01	5.06	4.85	4.84	4.96	4.86

There was a 6% decrease in the number of applicants compared to the previous cycle. The total verified applications decreased by 8%.

### Designations

The top three designations for applicants to the Doctor of Optometry program were: Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Illinois 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.**

State	School	Total Applicants
IL	Chicago College of Optometry, Midwestern University	522
IL	Illinois College of Optometry	976
IN	Indiana University School of Optometry	441
PR	Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry	206

MA	MCPHS University School of Optometry	652
MI	Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University	194
AZ	Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry	561
MA	New England College of Optometry	781
OK	Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry	265
FL	Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	950
OH	The Ohio State University College of Optometry	517
OR	Pacific University College of Optometry	530
PA	Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry	1017
CA	Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University	562
TN	Southern College of Optometry	713
NY	State University of New York State College of Optometry	435
AL	University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry	382
CA	University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry	239
TX	University of Houston College of Optometry	606
TX	University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry	513
MO	University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry	295
KY	University Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry	474
CA	Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry	706

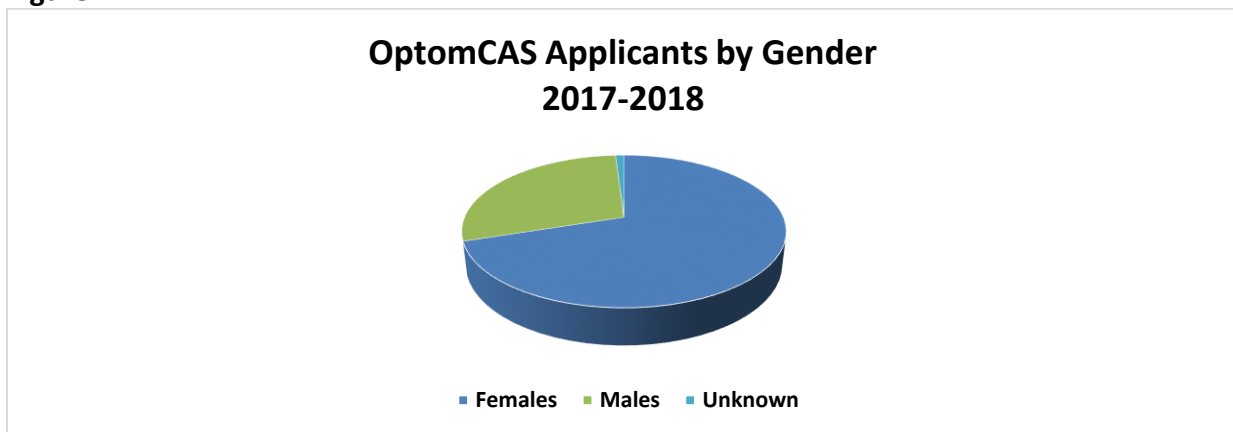
## Demographic Information on the Doctor of Optometry Applicant

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OptomCAS demographic data are captured on the OptomCAS application. This information cannot be verified by Liaison staff.

### Gender

Figure 1.



As shown in Figure 1, females comprised 70% of the OptomCAS applicant pool with males at 29%. Less than 1% of the applicant pool's gender was unknown. There was an increase in female applicants and a decrease in male applicants compared to the previous OptomCAS admission cycle.

## Age

Figure 2.

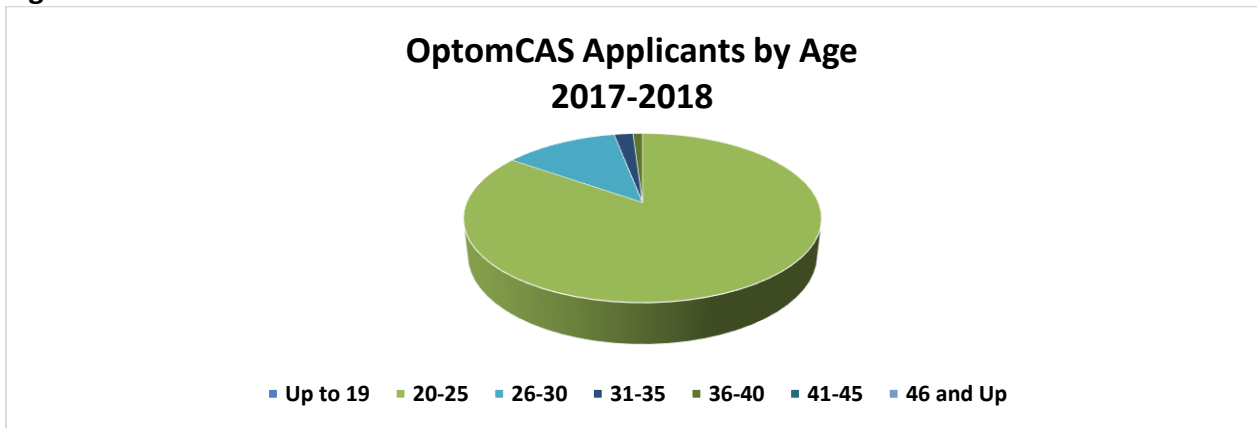
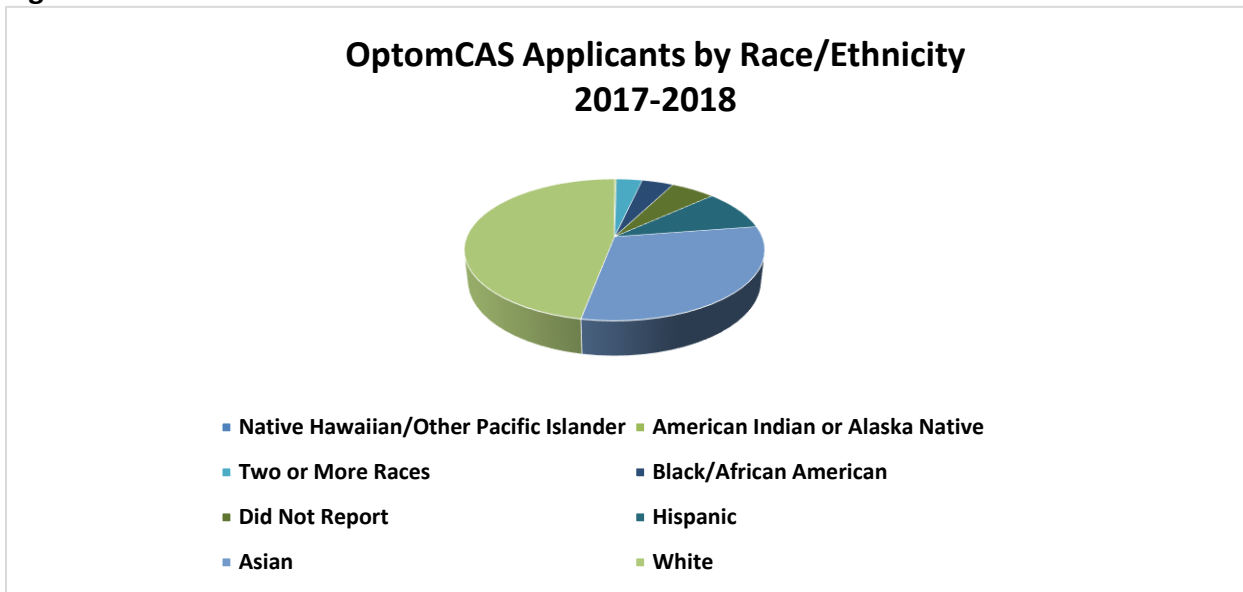


Figure 2 shows that the majority of applicants were in the 20-25 age range. The average age for all applicants was 23.7 with a median age of 22. The youngest applicant was 18 and the oldest was 57. There was a very slight change from the previous OptomCAS admissions cycle regarding the average and median age.

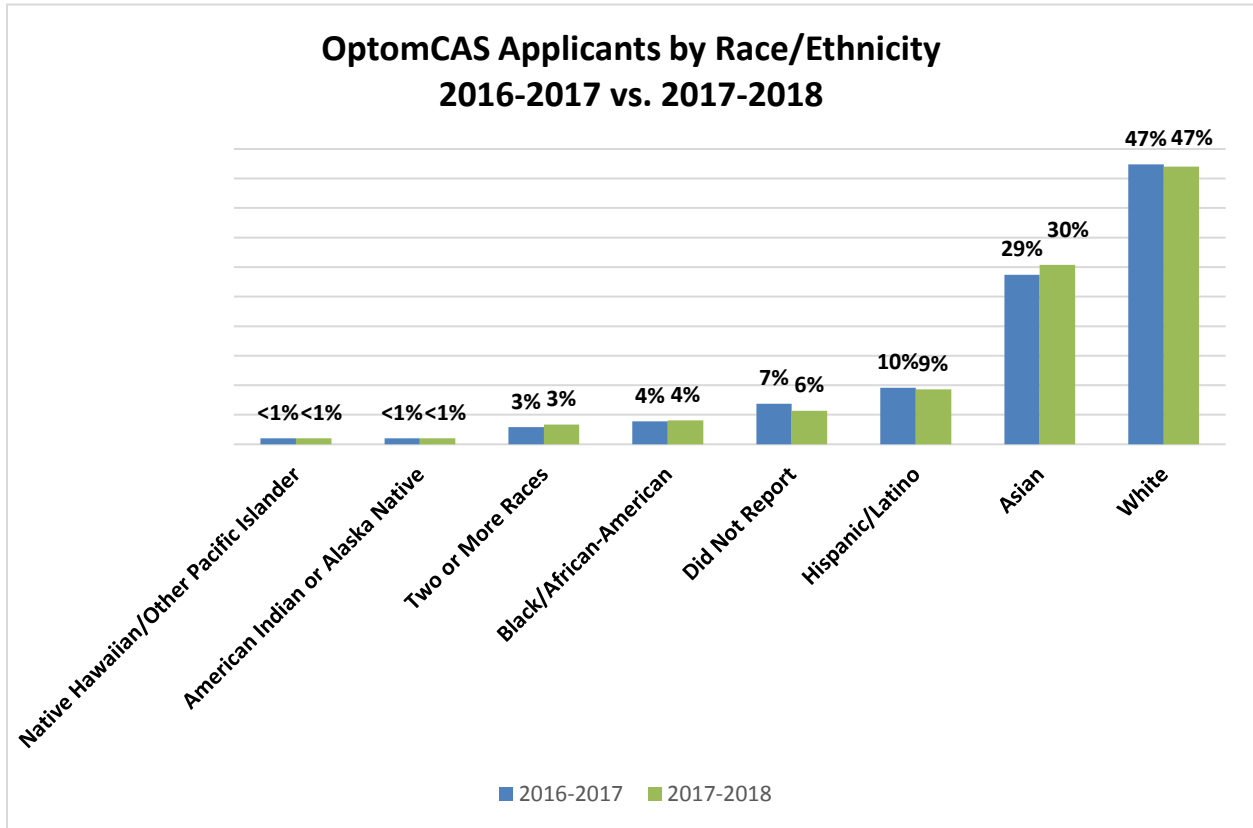
## Race/Ethnicity

Figure 3.



As shown in Figure 3, the majority of applicants were White (47%) with the other applicants reporting Asian (30%); Hispanic/Latino (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%). Six-percent of applicants did not report a race.

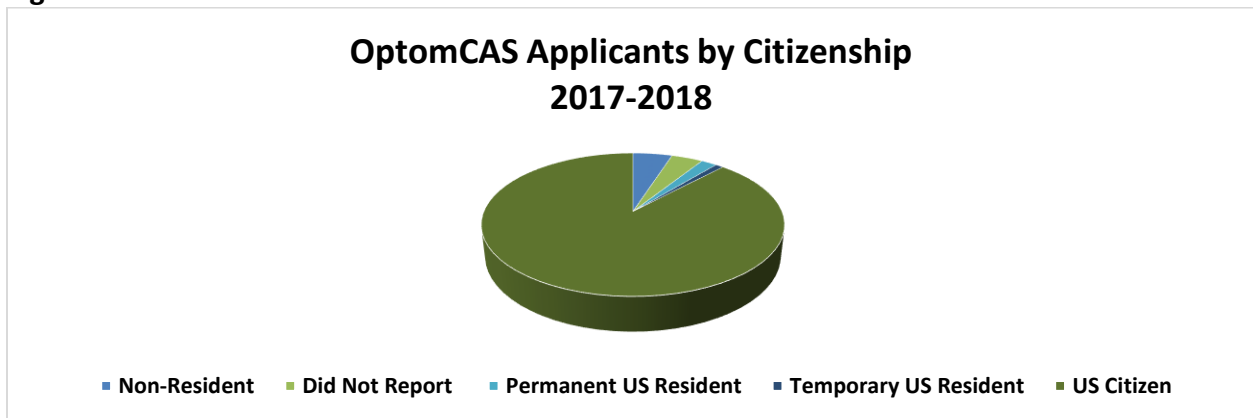
Figure 4.



As shown in Figure 4, there were minor shifts in the race/ethnicity categories for this admissions cycle from last cycle.

## Citizenship

Figure 5.



As shown in Figure 5, the majority of applicants in 2017-2018 were US citizens at 88%; 5% were non-residents; 4% did not report; 2% were permanent US residents; and less than 1% were temporary US residents.

## **State of Residence**

The top five states where OptomCAS applicants claimed their state of residence in 2017-2018 were: California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois. There were 205 applicants from Canada. In the 2016-2017 Admissions Cycle, the top five states were the same with 200 applicants from Canada.

## **First Generation College Student**

In 2017-2018, 64% of OptomCAS applicants had a parent who attended/graduated from college, while 30% of applicants are first generation college students. Six 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 were: 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 California higher education system claimed three of the top five spots for feeder institutions for OptomCAS applicants. These institutions were: University of Houston; University of California, San Diego; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Texas; and University of California, Irvine. In 2016-2017, the top five feeder schools were: University of California, Irvine; University of Houston; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, San Diego and University of California, Berkeley.



## GPA

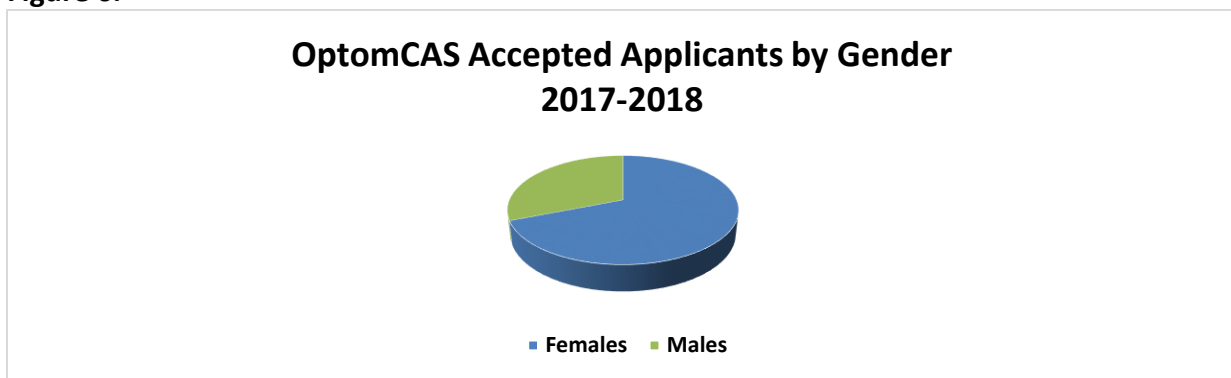
OptomCAS calculates a standardized GPA to aid the schools and colleges of optometry in evaluating applicants using uniform and consistent criteria. The overall cumulative GPA for all applicants was 3.34 – for males it was 3.31 and 3.35 for females. The GPAs were similar in the last admissions cycle – 3.30 for males and 3.35 for females.

## Accepted Profile of the Doctor of Optometry Applicant

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### Gender

Figure 6.



For Admissions Cycle 2017-2018, 69% of accepted applicants were female and 31% were male. In 2016-2017, 65% were female and 35% were male.

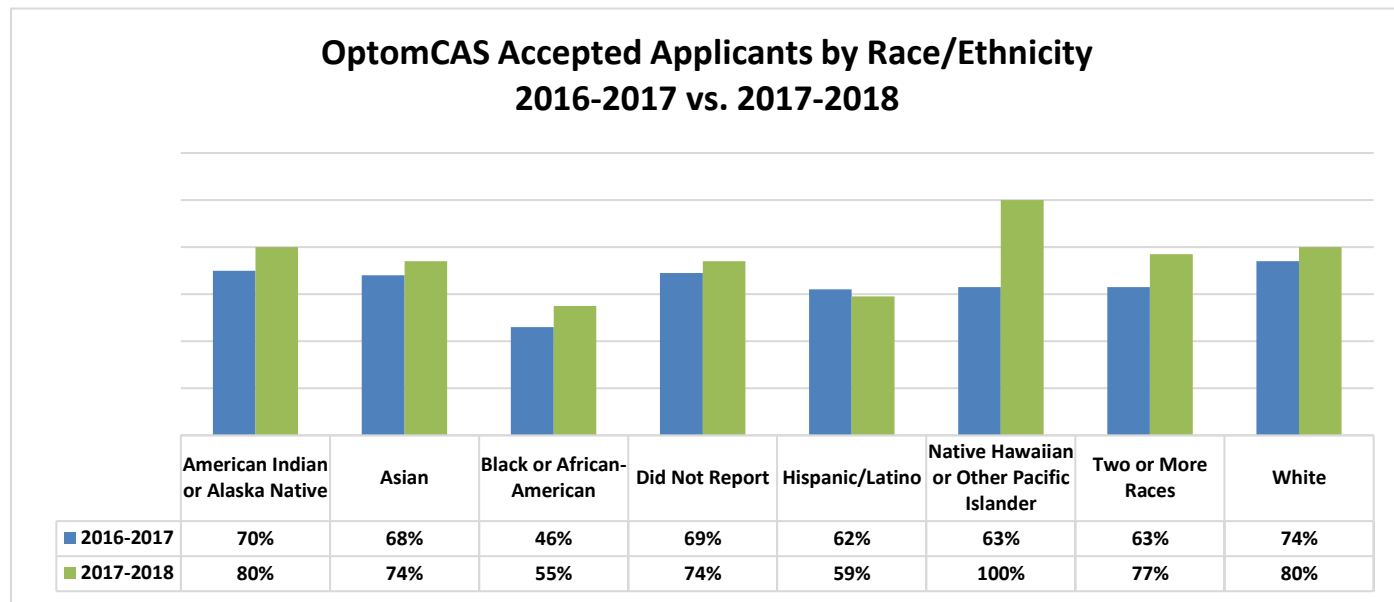
### Age

The median age for accepted applicants was 22 years old. It was the same last cycle.

### Race/Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 7 below, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander had the highest rate of acceptance at 100%, followed by White and American Indian/Alaska Native at 80%; Two or More Races at 77%; Asian at 74%; No Race Identified at 74%; Hispanic/Latino at 59%; and Black/African-American at 55%.

**Figure 7.**



All races/ethnicities except Hispanic/Latino increased the rate of acceptance from 2016-2017.

### **Citizenship**

Eighty-eight percent of applicants accepted were US citizens; 5% were non-residents; 4% did not report; 2% were US permanent residents; and less than 1% were temporary US residents.

### **GPA**

For 2017-2018, the average overall GPA for accepted applicants at the twenty-three schools and colleges was 3.42.

### **More Information**

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

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