



Saskatoon Health Region Orthoptic Program
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Saskatoon Health Region Orthoptic Program Information Letter Next student intake – **July 2023**

About our Program

An orthoptist is an eye care health professional who works in partnership with an ophthalmologist (eye physician and surgeon). The practice of orthoptics includes the assessment, evaluation, and identification of disorders of vision, binocular vision and ocular motility, for the purpose of enhancing or restoring function. Orthoptists also implement and monitor non-surgical treatments. Please visit www.tcos.ca, the website of Canada's national professional orthoptic organization (The Canadian Orthoptic Society), for more information and a video on orthoptics as a career. You can also consult the Canadian Orthoptic Council's website at www.orthopticscanada.org.

Saskatchewan is home to one of three accredited Orthoptic Programs in Canada, located within the Eye Care Centre of Saskatoon City Hospital. Saskatoon's program has been in operation since 1964.

The program is structured such that students are required to be in full time attendance at the Eye Care Centre, Saskatoon City Hospital, Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 5:00 pm. Didactic studies and extensive supervised clinical practice form the core of the Saskatoon program. The first four months of the orthoptic program are considered probationary, and an evaluation carried out by the faculty at the end of this period will determine an individual's suitability for continuation.

Following successful completion of the 24 month course, students may apply to take the national written, oral and practical examinations in May and June, which are set by the Canadian Orthoptic Council (COC). Upon successful completion of the examinations, the individual will be eligible for registration and employment as a Certified Orthoptist in Canada, and may choose to work as an orthoptist in the private practice of one or more ophthalmologists, or a hospital eye clinic in Canada. The American Orthoptic Council (AOC) recognizes Canadian Certification for employment in the USA. There are many opportunities for employment for ophthalmic personnel in North America.

Tuition for students beginning their course in 2023 is currently set at \$5000.00 per year for Canadian citizens. Tuition for international students beginning in 2023 is currently set at \$10000.00 per year. Please note that tuition is reviewed on an annual basis and may be adjusted prior to the next intake of students in 2023. Other costs associated with the program include

textbooks (typically \$300.00 to \$500.00 for the 24 months of study), a final exam fee, and accommodation and meals at the final exam site. Students may be eligible for Canada Student Loans. There are scholarship opportunities available from both the International Joint Commission of Allied Health Personnel (iJCAHPO) and The Canadian Orthoptic Society during the course of study.

Application Process

Applications will be accepted from January 16 to March 3, 2023, from individuals who will have completed an undergraduate university degree in Canada before July 2023. **DOCUMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BEFORE JANUARY 16, 2023.** Our preference will be for those who have completed one or more courses in any of the following areas: physiology, human biology, anatomy, physics, statistics, research or mathematics.

Work or volunteer experience in the health care field will be considered an asset. Candidates should possess sound judgment, emotional maturity, critical thinking skills and the ability to relate to small children and adults. The ideal candidate will be a self-motivated learner with a drive to further their knowledge for the purpose of evidence based patient care. Effective verbal and written communication skills are a necessity.

Please visit our web page in January 2022 for an application package. All prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to connect with a practicing orthoptist to discuss the career prior to applying. Please contact us at the address above if you wish to have assistance in arranging this.

Note: All students who obtained their undergraduate degree *outside* of North America must hold a degree equivalent to a Canadian undergraduate degree and are required to provide a Specialized Assessment Certificate from IQAS (<https://www.alberta.ca/iqas-overview.aspx#toc-0>) **WITH** their application. IQAS application submission and fees are the student's responsibility. Please arrange to have this documentation completed before the application deadline of March 3, 2023. This process may take in excess of 4 months. Please check with the program for the acceptability of other assessment certificates.

Note: All students for whom English is not the first language must have a TOEFL or IELTS score report sent directly to the Orthoptic Program by a TOEFL center before the application deadline. The minimum acceptable TOEFL score is 86 (internet based). The minimum IELTS (Academic) overall band score is 6.5. Other tests of English mastery may be acceptable. Contact the program for more information on other acceptable tests.

Interview

All applications received are reviewed by a committee and must meet minimum criteria to be selected for interview. Five selected applicants will be required to attend a personal interview in April 2023 (date to be determined), and provide proof of citizenship. Candidates residing more than 100km from Saskatoon may request to have their interview via telephone or virtually.

Acceptance

One to three students are accepted after interviews are completed, and will be notified by April 28, 2023. New students will be required to have a police records check prior to starting, will require specific up to date immunizations and will need to complete a pre-hire online package as per school policy. International students are required to obtain a student visa after acceptance. Information about federal requirements for international students studying in Canada can be found here <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada.html> and/or <https://www.canada.ca/fr/immigration-refugies-citoyennete/services/etudier-canada.html>

Course Dates

The course will begin July 3, 2023, with distance learning. Students will be expected to be on site in August (date to be announced). The last day of the course will be in June 2025, dependent upon the date of the final examination.

For further information or an application, please write, fax or e-mail the address above.