

Orthoptics, Professional Certificate

Requirements

The professional Certificate in Orthoptics is a postgraduate certificate program. The orthoptic fellowship is offered by the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. A baccalaureate degree is required for application.

Orthoptics is an allied health profession and clinical science pertaining to the study of eye movements, visual function, and binocular cooperation. An orthoptist is an eye muscle specialist who works under the supervision of an ophthalmologist.

The majority of the 24-month training period is spent in a clinical setting. At the completion of the training period, candidates take written and practical board examinations administered by the American Orthoptic Council.

The first four to six weeks are spent reviewing general anatomy and physiology and learning the basic anatomy, physiology, and terminology of the eye. Students are introduced to patient examination initially by observation of physicians and orthoptists, and gradually build up their exam skills as each new technique is learned. Over the first six months, optics and principles of strabismus (eye misalignment) and amblyopia (lazy eye) are taught in depth.

In the second six months of training, students expand their knowledge of basic orthoptic and ophthalmologic principles and apply them to a more complete patient examination and diagnostic skills.

The remaining months are spent examining patients in clinic, mastering examination techniques, and differential diagnosis as well as becoming proficient in the interpretation of diagnostic tests. At this stage, orthoptic students participate in the prescription of specific types of nonsurgical therapy. Each week, time is reserved for ophthalmic and orthoptic lectures, personal study time, or testing.

Contact the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences for information about the Certificate in Orthoptics.