

Ophthalmic Laboratory Technician



What do they do?

Ophthalmic laboratory technicians make prescription eyeglasses and contact lenses. Their work can include cutting, shaping or polishing lenses and assembling lenses and frames to create prescription glasses.

Where do they work?

Most ophthalmic lab technicians can work in a variety of settings, like optometrist offices, medical supply stores, medical equipment laboratories or eyeglass stores.

Ophthalmic lab technicians generally do not have a lot of contact with the public, but they do work with physicians and other techs.

Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for ophthalmic lab technicians is \$33,070.



Education:

There are no college level education requirements for becoming an ophthalmic laboratory technician. Ophthalmic technicians must have a high school diploma or GED, and learn on the job.

High school students interested in becoming an ophthalmic laboratory technician should consider taking classes in industrial arts, computer technology and design.

Professional Associations:

The Optical Lab Division of The Vision Council is a professional organization which provides training materials for optical laboratories and eye care professionals.

www.ola-labs.org



If interested in advancing your career after becoming an ophthalmic laboratory technician, you can learn more by visiting the website for the American Board of Opticianry. The ABO provides national certification for both dispensing opticians and contact lens examiners:

www.abo-ncle.org



Potential for Advancement:

Ophthalmic laboratory technicians with some experience can work their way into a supervisory position, or train new technicians.

Outside of health care, ophthalmic laboratory technicians also make lenses for optical instruments like telescopes and binoculars.

Dispensing Optician:

By participating in a formal training program, an ophthalmic laboratory technician could become a dispensing optician, who helps fit and repair eyeglasses and contact lenses.

The dispensing optician receives prescriptions, takes measurements of customers' eyes and creates the work orders that ophthalmic laboratory technicians complete.

Dispensing Opticians who work in a small clinic may also perform the duties of ophthalmic laboratory technicians.

This position requires a lot of contact with the public. Dispensing opticians help customers choose frames and lens treatments, like tints or special coatings, and also help educate customers on how to care for their eyewear.

Average Pay: \$32,940

Job Outlook: 29 percent (much faster than average)

Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for ophthalmic laboratory technicians is expected to grow 7 percent between 2012-2022, which is about average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition, Dental and Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians and Medical Appliance Technicians: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/production/dental-and-ophthalmic-laboratory-technicians-and-medical-appliance-technicians.htm>



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