

AFSC 42E4, Staff
AFSC 42E3, Qualified
AFSC 42E1, Entry

★OPTOMETRIST
(Changed 31 Oct 23)

1. Specialty Summary. Examines, diagnoses, treats and manages diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye and associate structures as well as diagnoses related systemic conditions. Serves as an integral part of the military health team and an entry point into the military health care system. The scope of optometric practice in the Air Force includes but is not limited to comprehensive primary eye care services for all eligible patient beneficiary categories; comprehensive specialty services, including contact lenses, low vision and vision training; co-management of ocular surgery and ocular complications of systemic illness in the inpatient and outpatient setting; primary eye care consultant for other health care professionals in the military health care system; promoting prevention and wellness, vision conservation, education and training activities, vision screenings, and positive health behaviors.
 Related DoD Occupation Group: 260804.

2. ★Duties and Responsibilities:

- 2.1. Examines eyes and vision. Examines, diagnoses, treats, and manages diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures, as well as diagnosis of related systemic conditions utilizing refractive, pharmaceutical, and rehabilitative (low vision, contact lens, and binocular vision) procedures.
- 2.2. Prescribes treatment. Utilizes and prescribes pharmaceutical agents for the examination of the eye and adnexa as well as treatment and management of vision disorders, diseases, and conditions of the eye and adnexa. Utilizes and prescribes ophthalmic and other rehabilitative prosthetic devices (such as spectacles, contact lenses, and low vision devices) and trains in their use.
- 2.3 Orders studies. Orders diagnostic laboratory studies (such as preparation of specimens for cultures, sensitivity testing, smear and histological analysis, chemistry, hematology, coagulation, serology and immunology, nuclear medicine, and urinalysis); orders diagnostic imaging studies (such as ultrasound of the eye, head, neck, heart; ocular fluorescein and indocyanine green angiography; and radiology of the eye, orbit, head, neck, chest including X-ray, computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, magnetic resonance angiography with and without contrast).
- 2.4. Consults with attending physicians and other health care providers. When requested, augments the care of patients and provides referral to appropriate health care providers of patients with medical, surgical, psychiatric, and rehabilitative conditions.
- 2.5. Performs clinical procedures. Provides refractive status determination; binocular vision status determination; ocular and adnexal health evaluation; external, anterior segment and fundus photography with interpretation; visual field measurement and interpretation, ocular electrodiagnostic measurement with interpretation; ocular diagnostic imaging (optical coherence tomography, scanning laser polarimetry, retinal thickness analyzer, ultrasonographic and laser) with interpretation; ocular angiographic photography with interpretation; epilation of lashes; expression of adnexal glands; examination, testing, dilation and irrigation of the lacrimal apparatus; insertion of temporary and permanent punctual plugs; removal of non-perforating foreign bodies from the eye and adnexa.
- 2.6. Conducts research. Plans and conducts research in areas of clinical optometry and physiological optics, such as physical standards, protective and corrective eyewear, examining methods and techniques, and perceptual problems associated with aeronautics and space flight.
- 2.7. ★Manages optometry activities. Directs, supervises, and reviews performance of optometrists and ophthalmic technicians with emphasis on meeting the Defense Health Agency (DHA) business plan goals while providing quality care in alignment with the clinical guidelines of the American Optometric Association. Monitors day-to-day clinical and administrative activities to determine compliance with procedures governing optometric activities. Instructs ophthalmic technicians in local operational procedures and in use and maintenance of ophthalmic instruments. Develops, implements, and conducts process improvement initiatives, collects and analyzes eye and vision treatment outcome data, and develops research program documents, evaluations, procedures, operating instructions, and policies. Reports optometric activities to appropriate squadron commander IAW AFI 48-101, *Aerospace Medicine Enterprise*, and facilitates clinical readiness for various inspections.
- 2.8. ★Manages and directs occupational vision programs. Plans, supervises, and participates in vision conservation and eye protection programs according to AFMAN 41-210, *Tricare Operations and Patient Administration Functions* and AFJI 44-117, *Ophthalmic Services*. Works with the base safety office, public health and flight medicine personnel to identify eye hazardous areas and occupations and supervises visual screening of personnel in such areas. Arranges for professional services, procurement, and dispensing of gas mask inserts, ballistic protective eyewear inserts and safety eye wear for military personnel and civilian employees of the Department of Defense.
- 2.9. ★Manages and directs aerospace and operational vision programs. Manages and directs the Aircrew Soft Contact Lens Program and the Corneal Refractive Surgery Program, in coordination with the Flight Surgeons Office IAW DAFMAN 48-123, *Medical Examinations and Standards*. Supports the Flight and Operational Medicine Clinic and the Medical Standards Management Element with flying class and special operations physicals, aeromedical waivers for vision and ocular conditions, and other vision services.

3. ★Specialty Qualifications:

- 3.1. Knowledge. Must maintain currency in the delivery of primary eye care services to include treatment and management of disease and disorders of the visual system utilizing pharmacology and state-of-the-art ophthalmic technology.
- 3.2. Education. For entry into this specialty, completion of a Doctor of Optometry degree from a four-year college of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), and acceptable to the Surgeon General, HQ USAF, is mandatory.
- 3.3. Training.
- 3.3.1. ★For award of AFSC 42E3, completion of the Air Force Aerospace Optometry Course (Aerospace Optometry: L5OXO42E3 09AB) is mandatory unless waiver by the Associated Corps Chief for Optometry.
- 3.3.2. ★Residency and/or PhD training is encouraged, not mandatory.
- 3.4. Experience. For award of AFSC 42E3, a minimum of 12 months of experience in optometry assignments is mandatory. Experience must be in primary eye care services to include the examination, diagnosis, treatment
- 3.5. Other. The following are mandatory:
- 3.5.1. For entry into this specialty, eligibility for a current, valid, active and unrestricted state license to practice optometry utilizing therapeutic pharmacologic agents by achieving a passing score on all three parts of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) Exam is mandatory. Such licensure must be attained within 12 months of entering active duty.
- 3.5.2. For award and retention of AFSC 42E3, a current, valid and unrestricted state license to practice optometry utilizing therapeutic pharmacologic agents is mandatory.
- 3.5.3. ★Must obtain and maintain clinical privileges IAW DHA-PM 6025.13 Vol 4 and/or AFI 44-119, *Medical Quality Operations* (or be immediately eligible for said privileges if assigned to a non-clinical position.)