



OUR MISSION

At NECO, our mission is clear: **we change the way people see the world.** As a welcoming and inclusive community, we work collaboratively to drive change, advancing eye care and making it accessible to everyone.

CLINICAL TRAINING

NECO offers unparalleled clinical training opportunities. Starting after their first year, our students participate in rotations at various community health centers, where they gain hands-on experience with a wide range of systemic diseases and conditions. Our unique multidisciplinary approach encourages collaboration with diverse healthcare professionals, ensuring students receive a rich, well-rounded education.

IMPACT & SERVICE

Since our founding in 1894, community service has been central to NECO's mission. Through clinical services, outreach initiatives, and advocacy efforts, our students, faculty, and partners create meaningful impact both locally and globally.

Service is deeply woven into NECO's curriculum. Under the guidance of faculty, students perform vision screenings for underserved and at-risk populations while completing clinical rotations in community health settings, further strengthening their commitment to making a difference.

FOR THE APPLICANT

You are eligible to apply for the Four-Year Doctor of Optometry program if:

- ◆ You will have earned at least 90 undergraduate credits or a bachelor's degree by your intended start term.
- ◆ You have completed the majority of the prerequisite requirements, and will have a plan in place for completing any remaining prerequisites by your intended start term.
- ◆ *Recommended:* You have accumulated at least 20 hours of shadowing an optometrist. We are happy to help you arrange this if necessary.

We recommend applying as early in the cycle as possible. Our rolling admissions application cycle begins in July and the priority deadline to apply is March 31. After that date, we will accept applications on a space-available basis until May 15.

YEAR FOUNDED
1894

INSTITUTION TYPE
Independent/Private

NUMBER OF STUDENTS
520+

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
29%

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED
13

STUDENTS RECEIVING AID
85%

AVERAGE GPA (Class of 2027)
3.58

CONCENTRATIONS
Pediatric Optometry
Low Vision Rehabilitation
Cornea & Contact Lens

PROGRAMS OFFERED
Doctor of Optometry (OD)
MS in Vision Science
OD/MS

GLOBAL CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS
150

CLINICAL TRAINING NETWORK
2 NECO-Owned Clinics
3 Outreach Sites
9 Community Health Centers

PATIENTS TREATED ANNUALLY
75,000+

RESIDENCY OPPORTUNITIES
43

NECO LEADS THE WAY

- ◆ NECO was the first to expand access to eye care through community health centers and later Veterans Affairs (VA) health centers.
- ◆ NECO is frequently tapped for guidance on how to start eye clinics in community health centers, from business plan to clinical model.
- ◆ NECO faculty and alumni have been strong advocates for access to care in other countries, identifying ways to make eye exams and screenings more mobile and available. This includes testing equipment and training non-optometrists in basic screening methods.
- ◆ NECO advocated for the creation of federal and state guidelines on children’s vision screenings, including a way to ensure children identified as needing care get appropriate follow-up with an optometrist.
- ◆ NECO’s deep roots in community outreach, public health education, and exposing each student to this method of practice has influenced many graduates to practice in community health centers, mobile eye clinics, and continue advocacy for expansion of access to eye care for all.

NECO ALUMNI PATHS

Our alumni typically pursue a wide range of career opportunities in private practice, industry, and academia.

- ◆ They serve patients in a variety of settings including private practice, community health centers, university medical centers, VA hospitals, military bases, and retail vision providers.
- ◆ They specialize in many areas such as pediatrics, low vision, retinal disease, dry eye, contact lens, and pre- and post-operative management.
- ◆ They work in research and development at companies like Johnson & Johnson Vision, Abbott, Alcon, Bausch + Lomb, and CIBA Vision.
- ◆ They’re founders, CEOs, Chief Vision Officers of healthcare start-ups, medical technology companies, and other businesses.
- ◆ They lead professional organizations as well as community benefit organizations like VOSH and the Bernie Mac Foundation.
- ◆ They cultivate future optometrists as professors, deans, clinical education directors, adjunct instructors, and research coordinators at a wide range of educational institutions.

NECO STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Here is a sampling of some of our current student organizations:

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| ◆ American Academy of Optometry (AAO) | ◆ National Optometric Student Association |
| ◆ Asian Optometry Student Organization (AOSO) | ◆ Ocular Disease Club |
| ◆ Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK) | ◆ Performance Vision Club (PVC) |
| ◆ Canadian Association of Optometry Students (CAOS) | ◆ Prism LGBTQIA+ and ally organization |
| ◆ College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) | ◆ Private Practice Club (PPC) |
| ◆ Contact Lens Society (CLS):Contact Lens Society (CLS) | ◆ Sigma Upsilon Sigma |
| ◆ Fellowship of Christian Optometrists | ◆ Student Council |
| ◆ La Vista Spanish Club | ◆ Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) |

