

Applicant's Guide

Primary Care Optometric Residency Saint Louis Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Affiliated with the

College of Optometry, University of Missouri-Saint Louis

Description of Residency

The Primary Care Residency at the St. Louis VA Medical Center is a one year program of post-graduate clinical education with emphasis on the care of the older adult patient. It is designed to significantly advance the resident's capability as a provider of primary eye care beyond the entry level of practice.

The patient population at the St. Louis VA Medical Center is adults with the majority being males between 40 and 70 years of age. The residency provides extensive experience in the vision problems and eye diseases of the older adult, such as cataract, glaucoma, age-related macular disease, and diabetic retinopathy. Clinical services provided include refractive care, ocular disease evaluation and management, treatment with pharmaceutical agents, low vision care and some contact lens care.

The St. Louis VA Medical Center has two locations. The Jefferson Barracks (JB) Division is located in south St. Louis County along the banks of the Mississippi River. The chief patient care activities at JB are primary care, geriatric and rehabilitative inpatient and outpatient care, and mental health inpatient and outpatient care. The John Cochran Division (JC) is 18 miles from the Jefferson Barracks Division in midtown St. Louis City and provides primary care, secondary and tertiary care including acute medical admissions and all surgical care. There is an eye clinic at each division.

Jefferson Barracks is the site of the Medical Center's Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC). There are 25 GRECCs across the nation. Their mission is to establish integrated programs of research, education and clinical care related to geriatrics and gerontology. They have developed key clinical demonstration units and have been leaders in the training of health professionals in gerontology. GRECC scientists are among the leaders

in geriatric research. Also located at the JB division are the Spinal Cord Injury Unit, the Nursing Home Care Unit, the Geriatric Evaluation and Management Unit and the Domiciliary.

Optometry has sole use of the JB eye clinic. Its facilities are two complete examination rooms and a special testing room. Equipment includes a digital fundus camera, Humphrey Visual Field, pachymeter, hand held auto-keratometer and portable auto-refractor. The support staff is a nurse and a clerk.. An Intermediate Low Vision Clinic is located at JB.

The larger eye clinic is located at JC, which is used jointly by both optometry and ophthalmology. Ophthalmologic care is provided in affiliation with the Department of Ophthalmology, Washington University. There are a total of twelve examination lanes; 1 "red eye/triage" lane, 4 pre-evaluation nursing rooms, 2 technician rooms, specialty testing room for ocular coherence tomography, corneal confocal scanning, corneal topography, digital photography, A/B ultrasonography, a pre-surgical testing lane, a minor surgical room, an optical shop and a tele-retinal reading room. Optometry has use of six exam lanes and access to others as available. Total support staff is two ophthalmic technicians, three and a half nursing personnel, and two clerks, a clinic coordinator, surgical ophthalmic technician, two opticians and visual impairment services coordinator.

The residency is for a one year period, starting on July 1st and ending the following June 30th. The typical week for the resident is made up of 36 hours in patient care activities and about six hours of grand rounds, lectures or seminars. The resident is also expected to engage in scholarly activities in addition to the above activities.

Several other documents are available to give you a clearer picture of this residency: Curriculum statement; Mission statement, Goals and Objectives statement; and the Resident's Weekly Schedule. Please look these over carefully. The Curriculum statement outlines the educational objectives and learning activities of the residency. The Mission statement and the Goals and Objectives statement list in detail the goals and objectives of the residency. They provide a clearer picture of what the residency offers you and what is expected of you. The mission is the statement of the fundamental reasons for residency. The goals give clarification to the mission. Objectives describe outcomes expected of the residency. For example a goal of the residency is to provide the resident with experience in managing the vision and ocular problems of elderly patients. The objective is that the resident will have at least 200 encounters with elderly patients. Also included is the resident's weekly schedule. This gives you an idea of the activities in a typical week for the resident.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this guidebook. "You" means the residency applicant. "We" or "us" means the individuals having responsibility for the residency: the Residency Coordinator, the Director of Residencies and others. "Residency" means the Primary Care Optometry Residency at the St. Louis VA Medical Center. The "Residency Coordinator" is Steven Grondalski, O.D. He is a full time employee of the St. Louis VA Medical Center and is the optometrist directly responsible for the residency program, especially the day to day clinical education of the resident. The sponsor of the residency is the St. Louis VA Medical

Center. "VA" means Department of Veterans Affairs, a department of the federal government. "VA Medical Center" or "VAMC" means the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in the St. Louis Missouri area. The "Director of Residencies" is Vinita Henry, O.D. She is a clinical associate professor at the affiliated college of optometry and is administratively responsible for the overall quality of residency programs at her institution. "College" or "College of Optometry" means the affiliated educational institution, the College of Optometry, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Applying for the Residency

Learning More about the Residency

We recommend that you contact the Residency Coordinator or other faculty to learn more about the residency program. Better yet, if you are not already familiar with our program, we invite you to visit to the St. Louis VAMC to become acquainted with the facilities and meet our faculty.

Eligibility Criteria

Every candidate who is eventually accepted must go through the interview process and submit all required documents. To begin the residency you must have successfully graduated with the O.D. degree from a school or college of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education and have successfully passed all parts of the examination given by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO).

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Department of Veterans Affairs and the University of Missouri each have non-discrimination policies. This residency has a non-discrimination policy as to sex, age, race, religious creed and national origin. Federal regulation gives U.S. citizens first preference.

Application Procedure

The Residency participates in the Optometric Residency Matching Service (ORMS). The ORMS web site, <http://www.optometryresident.org/>, explains the application procedure. There is a processing fee, currently \$30.

To apply you complete the ORMS application form and submit the ORMS processing fee.

Send the following materials to the Residency Coordinator:

- A brief statement detailing your desire to complete a residency
- Curriculum vitae,
- Official NBEO scores,*

- Official transcripts of optometric education* and

* Photocopies are initially permitted. However, if you are selected and accept the residency position, you are required to provide official NBEO scores and official optometric education transcripts.

Also please send **directly** to the Residency Coordinator:

- Three letters of recommendation.

If you hold an optometry license, please submit copies of optometry licenses from all states or other governmental authorities.

The materials for the Residency Coordinator can be sent to

Steven J.Grondalski, O.D.
VA Medical Center, Eye Clinic (11F JC)
1 Jefferson Barracks Rd
Saint Louis, Missouri 63125

FAX (314) 894-5775

Your application needs to be in by **February 1st** to receive full consideration.

The Residency Coordinator contacts each applicant, and an interview is arranged. Once all the applicants have been interviewed, a prioritized list of the applicants is forwarded to ORMS. The ranking of candidates for the St. Louis VAMC residency is made by a committee of the Residency Coordinator, the Director of Residencies from the College of Optometry and residency faculty. Candidates will be judged by level of interest and motivation, optometry school class ranking, academic performance and NBEO scores. You also provide ORMS a ranking of the residencies in which you are interested. Based on this information ORMS matches up the applicants and the residencies. You can accept or decline any residency position you may be offered.

If you are selected for the residency, you will be provided with a letter of appointment, which is the formal offering of the residency position. Before starting your residency on July 1st you will need to complete the standard US government employment application form and undergo a pre-employment medical examination given at the St. Louis VA Medical Center.

Orientation

We will provide an orientation when you begin the residency. The first part will focus on the eye clinic and patient care procedures and policies. The second part is a general orientation given to all new employees of the VA medical center.

Benefits

The salary for the Residency is \$ \$30,099 for 2008-2009. You receive 13 days of annual leave (vacation) during the year and can also take up to 13 days for sick leave. You will also receive federal holidays. You can arrange for days to take state optometry license examinations and to attend continuing education. Professional liability insurance is not

needed for patient care provided in the VA Medical Center. Health insurance and life insurance are available, but each involves a deduction from your salary, the amount depending on the plan selected. You may attend continuing education programs sponsored by the College of Optometry at no charge. The College may also provide support for travel to a major optometric meeting as funding allows.