

Drexel University, Elkins Park Campus

A Brief History

Drexel University, Elkins Park Campus, continues a more than century-long legacy that began in Philadelphia when the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) was established in 1919.

Today, that legacy continues through Salus University's historic merger and integration with Drexel University, strengthening excellence in health sciences education and clinical practice across a range of professional, graduate, and certificate programs.

PCO's first class was comprised of 33 students and held at 1809 Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1919

PCO is the first school of optometry in the United States to award a Doctor of Optometry degree.

1923

PCO's growth requires a move to a large, 32-acre campus in the Oak Lane section of the city.

1932

The Eye Institute (TEI) opens.

1978

PCO is the first college to offer graduate degree and certificate programs in Blindness and Low Vision Studies.

1983

The college moves to an 11.5-acre main campus in the Philadelphia suburb of Elkins Park.

1998

The PCO School of Audiology is founded by Dr. George S. Osborne.

2000



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
**Elkins Park
Campus**

[Drexel.edu/ElkinsPark](https://drexel.edu/ElkinsPark)



The Pennsylvania Ear Institute (PEI), the clinical practice for the Osborne College of Audiology, opened.

2004



The Pennsylvania College of Optometry applies to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for University status.

2005

The Physician Assistant Studies (PA) degree program is established.

2007

PCO is granted University status and Salus University is born.

2008

The Occupational Therapy (OT) program welcomes its first class.

2012



The Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) program welcomes its first class and opens its clinical facility, the Speech-Language Institute (SLI).

2015

The Post-professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy is established.

2016



TEI celebrates 40 years of service to the Oak Lane community while Salus University celebrates its 10th year as a multidisciplinary institution.

2018

PCO celebrates its centennial anniversary.

2019

Salus University launches a Post-baccalaureate in Health Sciences program.



The Orthotics and Prosthetics (O&P) program officially launches.

2022

Salus University launches a Post-baccalaureate in Speech-Language Pathology program.



Salus University signs an agreement to merge with Drexel University, launching phase 1 on June 30, 2024.

**2023
2024**

Salus University officially becomes Drexel University, Elkins Park Campus, on July 3, 2025.

2025