

WHAT ARE AN ORTHOTIST / PROSTHETIST?

Prosthetists/Orthotists are responsible for the provision of prostheses (artificial limbs) to people with amputations, and orthoses (supportive devices) to people with muscular and skeletal disabilities. They aim to maximise the function and comfort of the client by providing the most appropriate prosthetic or orthotic treatment.

ROLES OF AN ORTHOTIST / PROSTHETIST

- Establish clients' needs by physical examination
- Provide advice to other health care professionals in pre-surgical planning and in the formulation of prescriptions for prostheses or orthoses
- Design, fabricate, fit and align the prostheses or orthoses
- Test the effectiveness and comfort of these aids and educate clients regarding their use
- Record and report clinical information
- Supervise support personnel.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Prosthetists and orthotists work in special units located in major teaching hospitals and rehabilitation centres. Prosthetics/orthotics is a small, specialised area and opportunities for employment are gradually increasing. Employment may also be found with commercial companies which design and manufacture aids for the disabled. It is a very small occupation with good employment prospects.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

To become a prosthetist/orthotist you usually have to study prosthetics and orthotics at university. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, chemistry, mathematics, biology, physical education and physics are normally required.

SUPERVISION PROVIDED

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS OF AN ORTHOTIST / PROSTHETIST

- Mechanical aptitude
- Good communication skills
- Able to work as part of a team

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