

Home > Explore roles > Healthcare support worker > Roles as a healthcare support worker > Prosthetic technician

Prosthetic technician

Prosthetic technicians give the gift of artificial replacements (prosthetics) to patients missing an arm or leg.

Working life

As a prosthetic technician, you'll work with people of all ages who may have:

- been born with a limb missing
- lost an limb in an accident or during military service
- had a limb amputated as a result of a condition such as diabetes

You will work with prosthetists [1] who assess the patient's needs and you'll then make the prosthesis using appropriate materials. You will work with a range of materials including plastics, metals, leather, carbon fibre and composites. Prostheses [2] are made to measure, designed specifically for each patient. Frequently you'll be involved in the design stage, using use digital imaging techniques, CAD (computer-aided design) and CAM (computer-aided modelling).

You will aim to design and create prostheses [2] which match as closely as possible the missing limb. You'll also take into account what the patient wants and needs their prosthesis to help them achieve. For example, some prostheses [2] are designed for particular sports.

Who will I work with?

Along with prosthetists [1], you'll work with doctors (such as those specialising in rehabilitation medicine [3] , nurses [4], physiotherapists [5] and occupational therapists [6].



Where will I work?

As well as working in the NHS, some prosthetic technicians work in private clinics and in companies which supply the NHS. In a hospital or clinic the technician is likely to have contact with patients, in a manufacturing company they may not.

Entry requirements

Although there are no set entry requirements, employers usually ask for five GCSEs (or equivalent) including English, maths and a science or engineering subject. A level 3 apprenticeship standard for prosthetic and orthotic technicians has been approved. To get onto an apprenticeship, you will need to apply for an apprentice position with a health care provider. You can search for vacancies on the NHS Jobs website [7] and Find an Apprenticeship [8] website.

Employers may ask for engineering or manufacturing experience. They may also ask for experience in healthcare, particularly for jobs where you have contact with patients. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in health or social care, either in paid employment or voluntary work.

If you're applying for a role in the NHS, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

Skills and personal characteristics needed

A prosthetic technician needs to be:

- creative
- good with their hands
- able to work to deadlines
- methodical and accurate
- able to work from technical instructions

You'll also need

You will aim to design and create prostheses which match as closely as possible the missing limb.

- practical skills
- design skills
- problem-solving skills
- using hand tools
- working with different materials
- IT and CAD/CAM skills
- good communication skills if working with patients

Training and development

You'll be given the training you need for the job including:

- an introduction to the department and its procedures

- how to use the equipment
- manufacturing processes

You may have the opportunity to study for qualifications such as NVQ or BTEC. You may also be able to attend short courses on particular topics.

Prosthetic technicians can become members of the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists [9] (BAPO). BAPO run courses, conferences and seminars where prosthetic technicians can update their skills and network with others doing similar work. With experience, you could become a team leader, supervising the work of other technicians. You could apply to train as a prosthetist.

Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours and may include a mix of shifts, such as nights, early starts, evenings and weekends. You'll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC [10]) pay system, typically starting on band 4.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave, plus bank holidays, which increases the longer you're in service.

Other roles that may interest you

- Orthotic technician [11]
- Orthopaedic practitioner [12]
- Prosthetist/orthotist [13]
- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics [14]

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/prosthetic-technician>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/prosthetistorthotist>
 [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Prostheses> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medicine/rehabilitation-medicine> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>
 [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/physiotherapist>
 [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/occupational-therapist>
 [7] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk> [8] <https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>
 [9] <http://www.bapo.com/> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>
 [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/orthotic-technician> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/orthopaedic-practitioner>
 [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/prosthetistorthotist> [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/clinical-bioinformatics/clinical-bioinformatics-health-informatics>