

"It's a really exciting time to be working in prosthetics and orthotics as there is more and more technology available."

Felicity has just qualified and is excited to be kick starting her career as an prosthetist/orthotist!

Felicity Carroll

Prosthetist and orthotist

Employer or university

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Felicity Carroll

How did you become an allied health professional?

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I originally wanted to be a vet! However, after I'd done some work experience in this area I realised it wasn't for me, but I did know that I wanted a career that allowed me to help people.

I was good at maths and science at school and was always very practical so I knew I wanted to do a degree that let me play to my strengths, and prosthetics and orthotics does just that! It's the perfect combination of being able to care for your patients, often at a vulnerable time in their lives, as well as incorporating all the things about maths and science that I enjoyed at school.

When I applied for university, I was 100% sure that prosthetics and orthotics was the choice for me, so much so that it was the only course I applied to. I knew that prosthetics and orthotics had everything I was looking for.

What made you decide to become an allied health professional?

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I looked at various different health professions when it came to applying for university, but once the prosthetics and orthotics course took my eye, that was it and my choice was made.

I think what drew me to the degree and the career was that it uses such a variety of skills. The work has such a range, from interacting with patients and providing that all important one-to-one care, to all the technical aspects such as fitting a prosthetic, fixing a brace or working with biomechanics to make sure everything is aligned properly.

I've always been one for getting stuck in with a bit of everything and prosthetics and orthotics gives me the chance to do that every day!

What do you do on a day-to-day basis?

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I've just graduated but I've already had amazing experience working as a prosthetist and orthotist. My degree has been great in preparing me for the world of work as I've done four different placements in a range of different settings, which has allowed me to gain valuable experience.

One of my placements was in a respite care unit, another was at Headley Court working with military veterans, where I was able to see the full rehabilitation process of some patients. Another placement was at The London Prosthetics Centre which really opened my eyes to the high tech equipment available in our industry. My final placement was at Stockport NHS Trust where I learnt extensively about body-bracing systems, including how to deal with unstable fractures safely.

The academic side of university was really interesting too and gave me the foundation to step into work and put into practice all that I've learned. There are so many engaging lectures in a range of subjects such as anatomy and biomechanics. We also did roughly two days of practical learning a week which was great and kept things fresh. This included patient assessments with professional patients who have been working with the university for a long time to help us get the most out of our time with them.

When you're working, you see patients every day and this can range from a 20 minute assessment to a longer 45 minute session when you really get to know the patients and their needs. You also get to work with a wide variety of healthcare professionals ranging from physios and occupational therapists to nurses and surgeons who may seek your advice when performing an amputation.

What do you like most about your job?

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There are so many things I love about my job, it's hard to pinpoint one thing as the best. I love how no two days are the same. You get to work in so many different scenarios and the treatment and care you provide is different for every patient that you see, which really keeps you on your toes. You have to adapt and think outside the box which is challenging at times but always keeps things exciting.

It's also a really exciting time to be working in prosthetics and orthotics as there is more and more technology available. For example, the NHS is providing more funding for children to get fitted with blades for sports and activities and for adults to have access to micro-processor knees.

The people, both the patients you see and the team you work with, make the job really interesting. Working as a prosthetist/orthotist is also such a collaborative role. You're working within a multidisciplinary team, which means there's always something more to learn and expand your knowledge base. You also get to see so many different patients with a range of different needs. The role is not just about treating the patients physically but also psychologically; it's how you treat them as people that can really make a difference and means they leave happy.

Going further/next steps

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I've just graduated and started my first job so it's all new at the moment. But I'm excited to be kick starting my career as a prosthetist/orthotist. I will be working at Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton and I'm really lucky as I will be working in both roles.

I imagine that further down the line I will specialise, but for now I'm excited about being able to explore all my options!

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