

Prosthetist/orthotist

Transform the lives of your patients by helping them to run, walk better or simply stand without pain. Prosthetists and orthotists give back the power of movement to their patients, in a way that's as pain-free as possible and use the latest technology to create and fit [prostheses](#) ^[1] or aids.

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Working life

Prosthetists and orthotists have quite different roles but both aim to improve peoples' ability to move freely. Prosthetists create and fit artificial replacements for patients who are missing a limb, while orthotists correct problems or deformities in nerves, muscles and bones with a range of aids.

The roles are quite varied and may include:

- fitting a prosthesis for a military veteran and seeing the full rehabilitation process.
- giving a surgeon your advice when they're performing an amputation.
- helping a diverse range of ages, from children with cerebral palsy to adults with arthritis.
- preventing a patient from needing an amputation through well-fitting splints and complex footwear.

Lauren Jennings

Orthotist

There's nothing better than seeing a patient walk out of the clinic with a smile on their face because of something I've done.

[Read Lauren's story](#) ^[4]

Entry requirements

To become a prosthetist or an orthotist, you must first successfully complete an approved degree in prosthetics and orthotics. Only a few universities in the UK offer full-time courses

which take three or four years, depending on the university. Once you've successfully completed your degree you'll need to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC ^[5]) before you can start practicing. The other option is to apply for an apprenticeship degree.

Entry requirements for an undergraduate course are typically:

Apprenticeships logo

- two or three A levels, including maths, physics, biology/human biology or engineering.
- five GCSEs (grades A-C ^[6]), including English language, maths and science.

Or the equivalent qualifications:

- a BTEC, HND or HNC, including maths or engineering.
- a relevant T level.
- a relevant NVQ.
- a science-based access course.
- equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications.
- a previous degree or a full practicing qualification in a related area.

Every university sets its own entry requirements, so it's important to check with them directly. When applying for a prosthetics and orthotics degree, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

Annual payments

If you're eligible, you'll receive at least £6,000 a year to help fund your studies while at university. Your personal circumstances may mean you could receive more. And the good news? You'll never have to pay it back. [Find out more.](#) ^[7]

Degree apprenticeship

A degree apprenticeship with a healthcare provider is another way to become a prosthetist or an orthotist. Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. As well as a genuine interest in prosthetists or orthotists, you'll need to meet the academic requirements of the apprenticeship - typically holding qualifications at level 3. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren't eligible for student grants but you will receive a salary.

Must-have skills

Don't forget - academic qualifications aren't everything. As a prosthetist or orthotist, it's not just about treating your patients' physically but helping them feel happy with their blade or brace. You'll need to be a great communicator and be able to build a rapport with your patients. You'll also need both practical and technical skills and be good at maths. This is a physical job where using your hands is vital as getting the best performance out of a prosthesis or aid can take a lot of adjusting.

Training and career development

Once you've qualified and registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, you can choose to specialise as a prosthetist or an orthotist. You may find jobs where you can do both. You'll have annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) check-ins, where we'll discuss your career aspirations and plan how we can help you to achieve them, so you're always moving forward. You may also join the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO), where you can keep your skills up to date with courses, conferences and seminars.

You may choose to specialise in sports injury, diabetes, neurological conditions, or working with children. Teaching, research and management are other career pathways.

Pay and benefits

If you are employed in the NHS 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 \(AFC\) pay system](#) ^[8], typically starting on band 5. 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.

Some prosthetists/orthotists are employed in the private sector and contracted to the NHS, so their terms and conditions may be different.

• Find your course to become a prosthetist/orthotist

Region	Type of qualification	Full or part time
- Any - ▼	- Any - ▼	Search ▼

Displaying 1 - 3 of 3 matches

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Register for your guide to becoming a prostheist or orthotist

We'll email you a step-by-step guide to help you on your way to joining us

[Sign up](#) ^[9]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Orthotic technician](#) ^[10]
- [Prosthetic technician](#) ^[11]
- [Occupational therapist](#) ^[12]
- [Podiatrist](#) ^[13]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Protheses> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/privacy-and-cookies/#CookieDeclarationChangeConsentChange> [3] <https://www.youtube.com/NHSCareers> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/prosthetistorthotist/real-life-story-lauren-jennings> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#HCPC> [6] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Grades_A-C [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/study-and-training/considering-or-university/financial-support-university> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/we-are-the-nhs/registration?career=AHP> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/orthotic-technician> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/prosthetic-technician> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/podiatrist>