

Orthotist and Prosthetist

Orthotics and prosthetics are applied physical disciplines that address neuromuscular and structural skeletal problems in the human body with a treatment process that includes evaluation and transfer of forces using orthoses and prostheses to achieve optimum function, prevent further disability, and provide cosmesis.

The orthotist and prosthetist work directly with the physician and representatives of other allied health professions in the rehabilitation of the physically challenged. The orthotist designs and fits devices, known as orthoses, to provide care to patients who have disabling conditions of the limbs and spine. The prosthetist designs and fits devices, known as prostheses, for patients who have partial or total absence of a limb.



Career Description

The role of the orthotist and prosthetist includes, but may not be limited to, five major domains: clinical assessment, patient management, technical implementation, practice management, and professional responsibility.



Employment Characteristics

Orthotists and prosthetists typically provide their services in one or more of the following settings: private facilities, hospitals and clinics, colleges and universities, and medical schools.



Salary

According to the National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education, the salary for board-certified orthotists and prosthetists averages between \$42,000 and \$60,000. Refer to Section IV, Table 5 of this *Directory* for more information, or see www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary.



Educational Programs

Length. Orthotic and/or prosthetic education occurs in two forms: baccalaureate degree and certificate programs. Degree programs are based on a standard 4-year curriculum, and certificate courses range from 6 months to 1 year for one discipline to 18 months to 2 years for both disciplines.

Prerequisites. Applicants for the 4-year baccalaureate degree programs should have a high school diploma or equivalent and meet institutional entrance requirements. Applicants for postbaccalaureate programs should have a baccalaureate degree that includes appropriate coursework in biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, algebra, human anatomy, and physiology, as well as any other specified by the institution.

Curriculum. The professional curriculum includes formal instruction in biomechanics gait analysis/pathomechanics, kinesiology, pathology, materials science, research methods, diagnostic imaging techniques, measurement, impression taking, model rectification, diagnostic fitting, definitive fitting, postoperative management, external power, static and dynamic alignment of sockets related to various amputation levels, and fitting and alignment of orthoses for lower limb, upper limb, and spine with various

systems to be included. The curriculum also includes a clinical experience.



Inquiries

Careers

National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703 836-7114
703 836-0838 Fax
E-mail: info@ncope.org
www.ncope.org

American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists
526 King Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703 836-0788
703 836-0737 Fax
www.oandp.org

American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
571 431-0876
www.aopanet.org

Certification

American Board for Certification in Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703 836-7114
www.abcop.org

Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in collaboration with:
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