



# PROSTHETIST AND ORTHOTIST

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## What are Prosthetists and Orthotists?

Prosthetists and orthotists help people who have become disabled, or who were born with physical defects, by fitting them with artificial limbs or supports.

### Prosthetics

The field of prosthetics involves the design, fabrication, and fitting of artificial limbs (protheses) intended to replace a portion of the body that has been lost through amputation or was absent at birth (congenital). For example, this may range from a cosmetic replacement to a prosthetic leg or a myo-electric hand or arm.

### Orthotics

The field of orthotics involves the design, fabrication and fitting of orthoses (braces or splints) intended to prevent or correct deformities, protect a painful part of the body or improve the function of a weakened extremity. This may include anything from custom fabricated arch supports to braces for the knee, back, shoulder or arm.

### The job responsibilities of prosthetists and orthotists generally include:

- Examining and measuring patients following physicians' specifications;
- Assessing the needs of a patient;
- Designing appliances (may use computers and sketches);
- Fabricating or supervising the fabrication of the prosthetic or orthotic appliances;
- Fitting and adjusting the devices for patients;
- Instructing patients in the proper use and care of the devices; and
- Repairing and maintaining protheses and orthoses

### A career in Prosthetics and orthotics requires:

- The ability to work in independently and as a member of a team;
- Good interpersonal skills, such as empathy, tact, diplomacy and courtesy;
- Good communication skills;
- Good problem-solving and decision-making skills; and
- A mechanical aptitude

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## How do you become a Prosthetist or Orthotist?

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### In Saskatchewan, employment as a prosthetists or orthotists requires:

- Successful completion of an accredited college program in prosthetics and orthotics technology
- After graduation, 22 months' work experience under the guidance of a certified orthotist or prosthetist
- Certification by the Canadian Board of Certification of Prosthetists and Orthotists (CBCPO). Individuals are eligible to write the CBCPO national certification examinations following the practical training
- Once certified, a mandatory continuing education program ensures that professionals remain up-to-date with the latest developments in technology and other areas relating to patient care
- Registration with the Canadian Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (CAPO) (May be required)

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## Where can you be trained to be a Prosthetist or Orthotist?

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### **British Columbia**

*British Columbia Institute of Technology*  
School of Health Sciences  
<http://www.bcit.ca/health/prosthetics/>

**Please Note:** Through an inter-provincial agreement, a number of seats in the BCIT program are reserved every other year for qualified Saskatchewan students. These seats are reserved exclusively for qualified Saskatchewan students on a competitive basis.

### **Ontario**

*George Brown College Toronto City College*  
<http://www.georgebrown.ca/Marketing/FTCal/hsci/S102.html>

### **Quebec**

Montmorency College  
Département de Techniques d'orthèses et de prothèses  
<http://www.cmontmorency.qc.ca/toile/toile.php?catid=1#sites>

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## What do you need to get into the BCIT Prosthetist and Orthotist program?

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### **Entrance requirements for BCIT's program include:**

- A high school diploma, with Math 12 and Physics 11;
- C+ average or better in all academic requirements; and
- English 12 or English language proficiency

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## What do Prosthetists and Orthotists study?

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The two-year course of studies at BCIT combines lectures, labs and practical experience. The curriculum equips graduates to recognize patient problems, assess individual needs, design and construct appliances, select appropriate materials and deal with the emotional difficulties of patients.

After 22 months' work experience under the guidance of a certified Orthotist or Prosthetist, graduates are eligible to write the national certification examinations of the Canadian Board of Certification for Prosthetists and Orthotists.

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## Where do Prosthetists and Orthotists work?

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- Regional Health Authorities (hospitals, laboratories and clinics).
- Private practice.

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## What is the salary of Prosthetists and Orthotists?

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Prosthetists and orthotists' pay rates are according to the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan/SAHO Collective Agreement. <http://www.hsa-sk.com/>

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## Related Links

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**Canadian Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (CAPO),**  
<http://www.pando.ca/index.html>

**Saskatchewan Abilities Council**  
<http://www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca/>

**Wascana Rehabilitation Centre**  
[http://www.reginahealth.sk.ca/finding/long\\_term/wascana/wascana\\_rehab\\_hospital.shtm](http://www.reginahealth.sk.ca/finding/long_term/wascana/wascana_rehab_hospital.shtm)

Please check the Saskatchewan Health Bursary webpage for information about bursaries for health science students: [http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp\\_bursaries.html](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hhrp_bursaries.html)

