

## Orthotists and Prosthetists

**What is orthotics and prosthetics?** Orthotists and prosthetists (O&P professionals) are the health care professionals who create and fit orthotic and prosthetic devices – artificial limbs, braces, and other medical or surgical devices. Improvements in technology, and increases in injuries, have led to significant increases in demand for these professionals. Individuals may work specifically with orthotics (supportive devices like braces and inserts), or prosthetics (artificial limbs or other body parts), or with a combination of the two areas; they may build devices for their clients, or supervise technicians performing the construction.

**More details?** For more detailed information, including salaries and job prospects, visit the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: [www.bls.gov/Healthcare](http://www.bls.gov/Healthcare)

**Can UWW help me prepare for an accredited O&P training program?** We offer all the courses required for entry into O&P programs. We also prepare our students with a broad background, so that they have a great skill set, in case they decide to pursue other careers after completing their undergraduate degree.

### What do I need to apply for admission to an accredited O&P school?

- 1. Undergraduate degree (BS or BA):** Applicants must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university before entering into O&P training. The specific type of degree does not matter as much as successful completion of the courses in science and mathematics specified by the individual school.
- 2. Major and minor:** Many applicants will have majored in natural sciences, but this is not mandated by any of the schools.
- 3. Coursework related to O&P:** O&P programs need students who have already have successfully completed certain courses:

Requirement	Length/Credits (minimum)	UWW courses which meet the requirements
General biology	1+ course	BIO 141 (AND BIO 142)
General chemistry	1+ course	CHEM 102 (AND CHEM 104)
General physics	1 year / 8-10 credits	PHYSICS 140 AND PHYSICS 141
<i>Calculus-based physics (PHYSICS 180 AND PHYSICS 181) is acceptable but not required</i>		
Statistics	1 course / 3+ credits	BIO 303 OR PSYCH 215
Anatomy and physiology	1 course in each, or a two semester sequence	BIO 361 & BIO 362
General psychology	1 course recommended or required	PSYCH 211

- 4. Other coursework:** Students will need humanities and social science courses as part of their plan to meet the General Education requirements. Suggested courses include additional psychology courses such as developmental psychology or abnormal psychology, ethics, business management. Most schools also require math courses (algebra, trig, pre-calculus).
- 5. Overall academic record:** An applicant needs to have a good overall GPA and a good GPA in the pre-requisite courses. You will need to check your schools of interest for their GPA expectations and what you need to do to be competitive.
- 6. Entrance exam:** Most O&P programs require the GRE (Graduate Record Exam).

7. **Extracurricular activities:** Applicants are expected to have participated in extracurricular activities as an undergraduate. This is one indicator that you are able to work with other people, and that you have taken on responsibility and leadership.
8. **'Experience of the field':** Students are expected to have been exposed to the actual work of O&P professionals before applying; this can be completed by volunteering, observing (field observation) or job shadowing. Volunteering to work with injured individuals demonstrates your understanding of the mental and physical demands of this career. This experience will also provide you with material to include in your letter of application explaining why you want to pursue a career in this area.
9. **Other jobs and experiences:** All health schools look for applicants who have a depth of life experience. This can be demonstrated by your work record, military service, participation in athletics while in school, knowledge of a foreign language, etc.

**What happens then?** O&P professionals complete a master's degree. After graduation, you would need to complete requirements based on the state where you work; some states require licensure or certification. The school you attend will help you prepare.

**Professional organization:** Most O&P practitioners belong to the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (<http://www.oandp.org>); this organization is an excellent source of information for everyone with questions about the field. The American Board for Certification of Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics (<https://www.abcop.org/Pages/default.aspx>) is the organization that tests and provides credentials for professionals.

**UWW Advisor:** There is no designated advisor for this area.

**Training in this area:** There are only 13 schools for O&P practitioners in the US, including one each in Illinois and Minnesota.

Concordia University/Century College (St. Paul, MN)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.csp.edu](http://www.csp.edu)

Northwestern University (Chicago, IL)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.nupoc.northwestern.edu](http://www.nupoc.northwestern.edu)

Alabama State University (Montgomery, AL)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.alasu.edu](http://www.alasu.edu)

Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.bcm.edu](http://www.bcm.edu)

California State University Dominguez Hills (Carson, CA)  
M.S. in Health Sciences, O&P option program [www.csudh.edu](http://www.csudh.edu)

Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, MI)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.emich.edu](http://www.emich.edu)

Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, GA)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.ap.gatech.edu](http://www.ap.gatech.edu)

Loma Linda University (Loma Linda, CA)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.llu.edu](http://www.llu.edu)

St. Petersburg College/Florida State University (St. Petersburg, FL/Tallahassee, FL)  
MSIE O&P program [www.eng.fsu.edu](http://www.eng.fsu.edu)

*Masters of Science in Industrial Engineering: This program is based in an industrial engineering school, and it has higher technical requirements (physics and calculus) than other programs.*

University of Hartford (West Hartford, CT)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.hartford.edu](http://www.hartford.edu)

University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)  
M.S. in O&P program [www.shrs.pitt.edu](http://www.shrs.pitt.edu)

University of Texas Southwestern School of Health Professions (Dallas, TX)  
M.S. of P-O program [www.utsouthwestern.edu](http://www.utsouthwestern.edu)

University of Washington (Seattle, WA)  
M.S. of O&P program [www.rehab.washington.edu](http://www.rehab.washington.edu)