



Preparing to apply for jobs in prosthetics and orthotics

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A person's hands are visible at the bottom, holding a white rectangular sign. The sign has the words "Job Search" written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. The background behind the sign is a blurred cityscape at night with lights.

Job Search

Foreword

This guide has been developed to support people entering the prosthetic and orthotic workforce. This includes learners graduating as prosthetists and orthotists, people moving into the prosthetic and orthotic profession as support workers, technicians, or administrative support. The guide will provide practical advice on writing a CV and a covering letter, searching for jobs within the industry, preparing for interviews, commonly asked interview questions, and advice from employers.



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Preparing for the next phase of your career

WELCOME TO THE PROSTHETIC AND ORTHOTIC PROFESSION

Starting a new phase of your career can be incredibly exciting because it often comes with opportunities for growth, fresh challenges, and expanding your knowledge. You might be looking for your first job as a graduate Prosthetist/ Orthotist, or you may have chosen a career change and be entering the prosthetic and orthotic profession as a support worker, technician, or in an administrative role. In whichever role you are planning to join us, the profession is incredibly keen to welcome you and to benefit from your unique skills, experience, and perspective.

FEELINGS OF UNCERTAINTY

Whilst starting a new career is filled with opportunity the fear of the unknown and the uncertainty that it can bring can be stressful. The transition can impact not only your work life but your self-identity and financial security. It's quite common to experience imposter syndrome as you transition to a new career. These are feelings of inadequacy or worry despite your accomplishments, qualifications, and skills. This is something to be aware of with an understanding that this is a very common experience and one that you can control once you are aware of it. Whilst these challenges can make career transitions stressful, preparation and a supportive network can make the process manageable. Focusing on small goals, seeking out mentors in your chosen role, and acknowledging the positive aspects of change can help make the transition as smooth as possible. If you are a new graduate, internationally qualified and seeking work in the UK for the first time, returning to the workforce after a lengthy period of absence, or moving sectors or settings remember to ask employers about their preceptorship offers.

ADAPTING TO A DIFFERENT WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Different roles come with different demands on time and energy. Adapting to a new work-life balance, especially if it involves different hours or a longer commute, can take some time to adapt to. It's important to consider what each job can offer you in terms of work-life balance and what you need to prioritise at this stage of your life.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

Guidance and support are available to you. Your professional body can be a source of advice, as can your peers, your education provider, your employer, and your network of support. BAPO also has a dedicated mentoring platform exclusive and fully funded for BAPO members. Mentoring is also an excellent way to seek support and guidance when navigating career changes.



SOMETHING NEW IS COMING!

Writing a curriculum vitae (CV)

CV is short for 'curriculum vitae' which is a Latin phrase meaning 'course of life'. Some job applications will require a CV whilst others will request an online application only. The same principles apply to both. They both offer a chance to promote yourself. Employers are likely to see lots of CVs and job applications, taking your time to prepare a well written CV can be the chance to promote yourself and highlight what you can offer to prospective employers.

BASIC TIPS FOR WRITING A CV

It's important to ensure your CV is well written, formatted, and eye catching. You can use the following tips to avoid unnecessarily long, over complicated, or difficult to read CVs.

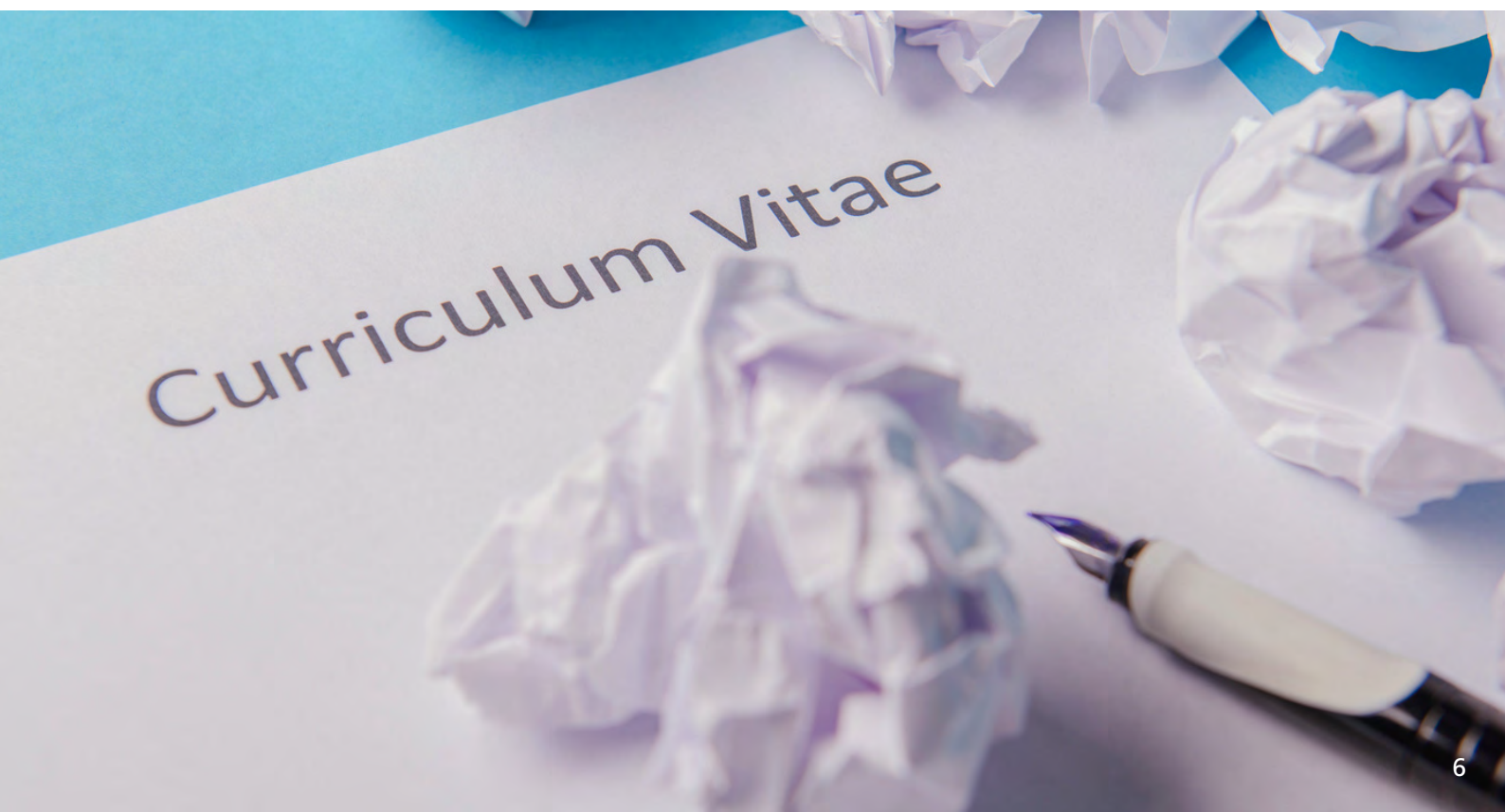
- Use a clear font like Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri.
- Use an appropriate font size. Body text should be 10-12 and headings between 14-18.
- Use standard margins to avoid too much text on the page and leave a bit of white space between sections. Use headings and bullet points to make your text clear and easy to read.
- Be clear and concise, avoid unnecessary detail and weed out any 'filler' words that don't add value. Always check your grammar and spelling twice!
- Ask someone to read your CV and provide you with feedback.
- For the best readability save your CV as a PDF document.

UPDATING A CV

If you already have a CV it is important to remove any information which is no longer relevant to the new stage in your career or is outdated. You will also need to tailor your CV to the job role you are applying for. This includes adding new achievements, experiences, and skills.

HOW TO TAILOR YOUR CV

Carefully read the job advert you are applying for, you will find a job description, essential criteria, and a person specification. Ensure you take each section of the essential criteria and person specification and highlight the knowledge, skills, and experience they are looking for. Compare that list with what you are able to offer. Ensure they are highlighted in your CV.



PREPARE YOUR CV IN SECTIONS

Your CV should be a brief account of your education, qualifications, and previous employment, professional experience, and skills. Your CV is a way of presenting yourself to the outside world. To make a strong impression, it's important to tailor your CV for each job application.

WHO YOU ARE AND YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

At the very top of your CV you should include your name, professional title (if applicable), and your contact details. Your email address and telephone number are all that are required, you don't need to add a postal address. Make sure the email address you provide is appropriately professional. Not, for example, rabid-cheese-eating-monster@yahoo.com. You should not add your date of birth, nationality, or any other personal information as these are not required.

INTRODUCTION

Start your CV with a short introduction about who you are and what your career aspirations are. It is advisable to consider the job you are applying for when you are writing this section. Prospective employers will want to see that what you bring aligns with what they are looking for, and that you have really thought about that.

WORK HISTORY

This section should include details of your work placements, volunteering, and paid employment. It is common practice to list your most recent experience first. You will need to include your employer's name, the job title you held or hold, the dates you were employed, and a couple of lines about the main duties of the job. If you are really proud of something you achieved in the role, you might also wish to add a line that refers to, for example, 'A key achievement in this role was ...'

It is common to have gaps in your work history. You may have chosen not to work due to life events, because you were focusing on your studies or because you have been unable to work for personal reasons, for example. You may have chosen not to work due to life events or you may have been unable to work for personal reasons. The key is to be open and honest. It's much better to include something like: 'Date 1 - Date 2: break from employment due to xxx' than to leave people wondering.

Just because you were not working doesn't mean you stopped learning or gaining new skills. There may be some transferable skills you can highlight during your gap in employment.

WHAT TO DO IF THIS IS THE FIRST JOB YOU ARE APPLYING FOR

If you don't have any previous work history you can focus on the skills you have learned through education, projects, work experience, or volunteering or through personal roles such as caring for someone. For example, time management and organisational skills, stock management, communication skills, having challenging conversations, negotiation skills, and so on.

You can also include interests and hobbies and the skills and achievements you've gained through these pursuits, e.g., leadership skills, working as a team, problem solving, overcoming adversity, resilience etc.

TOP TIP

If you have a lot of experience/work history you don't need to include roles from more than 10 years ago, unless they are relevant to the particular job you are applying for.



EDUCATION HISTORY

In this section you will need to list your educational achievements, these should be pertinent to the role you are applying for. For example, you might not need to list your early educational achievements if you have long surpassed them. For those achievements you do add you will need to include the names of your qualifications, the name of the education provider where you studied, and the dates you attended and the qualifications you achieved.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section is particularly important for those in professional roles where continued professional development (CPD) is key to registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This section should show your commitment to CPD.

KEY SKILLS

Use this section as an opportunity to add key skills important to the role you are applying for. You could include leadership skills, teaching skills, experience with particular technology, communication skills etc.

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

This is optional and if you decide to include it, it's important to keep this section of your CV brief and interesting. Do you have a particularly unique hobby or interest?

ACHIEVEMENTS

In this section you should list significant things you have accomplished. If you are further along in your career you may want to emphasise professional achievements. If you have won any awards you should also list them here. If you don't have much professional experience you might want to include achievements gained through sporting activities, volunteering, charity work, or your personal life.

REFERENCES

It's good practice to include a section on references. A referee can be a current or previous employer, a teacher, or a colleague. It is always advisable to first contact the person you are adding as a referee to ensure they are happy to provide you with a reference should it be required. It's customary to provide the contact details of two referees. It is also worth noting that you will be required to provide a reference from your current employer if applicable.

CV TEMPLATES

There are a vast range of free CV templates for you to use. Microsoft Word and Canva both offer a range of templates. A quick search online will also provide you with plenty of free templates. You will find templates designed for applying for a first job, changing careers, and for new graduates.

If applying for a role with the NHS, you will be required to complete an application form online and generally won't need to submit a CV.

ONLINE JOB APPLICATIONS

Some online applications don't allow you to upload a CV, however, the sections of the application are very similar to the sections in a CV. Make sure you read the online application carefully and use the information you have within your CV to guide your responses.

TOP TIP

A standard length for a CV in the UK is two sides of A4. As a rule of thumb a minimum of one page and a maximum of three pages is advisable.



Writing a cover letter

A cover letter is a document that accompanies your CV when applying for jobs. It is a personal introduction to you. Writing a cover letter can let an employer gauge an applicant's personality, communication skills, and attention to detail. It also allows you to share how your skill set and personal experience can bring value to the role you are applying for.

TIPS FOR WRITING A COVER LETTER

Write a new cover letter for each role you apply for, this will tailor the cover letter to the specific requirements of the job and the employer. **Keep the cover letter brief and to the point, but include:**

- Why you are writing the letter and the position you are applying for.
- Highlight relevant experience and the skills you have that match the job description. You can also include additional strengths that would be relevant to the role.
- Explain why you are interested in working for the company or organisation, what you can offer them, and why you are interested in this role. If you know the name of the hiring manager, include this in your letter and address them directly.
- You can use the STAR method to plan your wording in the letter.
- Keep it professional - stick to the facts and match keywords used by the employer in the job advert.
- Double-check spelling and grammar in the letter. Don't forget to proofread before you send it.
- Keep a copy to take with you to the interview for your information. This will stop your responses from being too vague.



Describe the situation, challenge, or event you faced



Explain what your responsibilities were in that situation



Describe what steps you took to overcome the challenge



Share what you achieved through your actions



Where will I find job vacancies?

Please see below several resources and strategies that can help you find P&O job opportunities in the UK:

- **The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists** has a free weekly newsletter where you can find a range of job vacancies from private employers and the NHS. To sign up to the news letter please go to www.bapo.com
- **Trac Jobs:** Dedicated to NHS roles, Trac Jobs is a key platform for finding public sector positions. www.trac.jobs/
- **NHS jobs:** A dedicated website for advertising vacancies within the UK National Health Service. www.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate
- **Indeed UK:** A broader job search site with listings for both NHS and private roles in the P&O field.
- **Social Media:** You will find job vacancies advertised on several social media platforms including LinkedIn.
- **Leading P&O Companies:** There are a range of prosthetic and orthotic companies who employ prosthetists and orthotists. You could check their websites for vacancies. They tend to advertise via social media and The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists.

FOR EMPLOYERS SPONSORING OVERSEAS WORKERS

Employers who wish to hire international professionals need a sponsorship license from the Home Office. There is an annual limit on the number of Certificates of Sponsorship issued, so employers need to ensure compliance with sponsorship regulations. Guidance on this process can be found in the UK Sponsorship Guidance.

www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers



Preparing for interviews

THE VENUE

The first thing to do is to check you have all the details of where the interview will take place, do you have the full address if it is an in-person interview? Do you know where to go when you reach the destination? Do you know who to ask for? Have you considered how you will get to the venue? If you are travelling by car do you know if parking is available? Check how long it will take you to get to the venue, you don't want to be late for an interview. Make sure you leave some extra time in your journey planning in case of unexpected challenges.

If the interview is taking place online do you know what program will be used e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc. Be sure to download the programme before the interview date to ensure you can access it and you know how to use it if you are not familiar with the software. Ensure you are in a private space with no distractions whilst the interview is taking place and that you have access to reliable Wi-Fi.

Before you accept the interview date make sure it works for you. It is important that you have enough time to properly prepare.

READ THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Make sure you read the job description carefully so you understand the skills and experience the employer is looking for.

READ THE APPLICATION AND/OR CV YOU SUPPLIED TO THE EMPLOYER

This is important because a significant amount of time can pass between you writing your CV or job application and the interview date. Familiarise yourself with the details you have submitted. It is likely that the interviewer will pick things from the CV or application and ask you to elaborate further during the interview. Think about experiences that you can describe to help highlight your key skills and experiences. Having these already in mind will be really helpful come the day. Using the STAR method will help you deliver your answers.



PRACTICE YOUR ANSWERS

Practice your answers to some of the frequently asked questions (see the next section for examples). If you are asked a question you weren't expecting, take a few moments to think. Some people like to have a pad and pen to hand so they can jot down the key aspects of a question to help keep them on track when they answer.

If you don't fully understand the question, it's okay to ask for more information or to ask the interviewer to repeat the question. If you don't know the answer it's okay, be honest and offer to follow up after the interview, alternatively, you can transition to something you do know.

It's OK to take brief notes/bullet points to an interview to remind yourself of key points you want to get across to the interviewers, This can be particularly helpful when answering competency/behavioural questions.

BE PREPARED FOR PRESENTATIONS OR TESTS

Some interviews will require you to prepare a presentation or test. If this is expected you will be informed when you receive notification that you have been selected for an interview. Sometimes you might not get the details of the presentation or test until a few days before the interview, so make sure you leave yourself plenty of time to prepare during that period.

Carefully read the details and familiarise yourself with what is expected of you. If a ten-minute presentation is required, practice to ensure you can deliver the presentation you have prepared in that timescale. You can expect to be stopped when time runs out.

WHAT TO WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW

Most employers will expect candidates to dress smartly, particularly in a healthcare setting. However, a growing number of employers encourage people to bring their 'best self to work' and this means dressing in a way that makes you feel comfortable, thus, an organisation's dress code will depend on the culture it is trying to promote. If there is any uncertainty it's best to be too smart than too casual.

If, for any reason, you decide not to attend an interview, please let the company know in good time. It's good manners, and P&O is a small industry – recruiters will remember!

TOP TIP

Arriving late to an interview will increase your stress levels and give the employer a bad impression. Try to arrive in good time.



Reasonable adjustments

The equality Act 2010 stipulates that a potential employer must make [reasonable adjustments](#) for job applicants or interviewees if they are disabled.

This can be relevant at any stage of the recruitment process. For example:

- providing an application form in a different format
- making sure interviews are held in a wheelchair-accessible room

Job applicants can ask for reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process, in which case the potential employer can ask you what is needed.

Potential employers must follow the law on discrimination when advertising, interviewing and deciding on new staff. Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination.

Direct discrimination is when someone is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic such as disability.

Indirect discrimination is when a working practice, policy or rule is the same for everyone but has a worse effect on someone because of a protected characteristic such as disability.

In recruitment, discrimination could happen through:

- the arrangements made for deciding who to offer the job
- the terms under which a job offer is made
- not offering someone the job

It's against the law for employers to discriminate against you because of a disability. The Equality Act 2010 protects you and covers areas including:

- application forms
- interview arrangements
- aptitude or proficiency tests
- job offers
- terms of employment, including pay
- promotion, transfer and training opportunities
- dismissal or redundancy
- discipline and grievances

By law a potential employer must ask anyone coming to an interview if they need [reasonable adjustments](#) so they can attend. For example:

- making sure the interview location is accessible for an applicant who uses a wheelchair
- giving someone more time to do a written test that is part of an interview
- providing a sign language interpreter for someone who is deaf

An employer who is recruiting staff may make limited enquiries about your health or disability. You can only be asked about your health or disability:

- to help decide if you can carry out a task that is an essential part of the work
- to help find out if you can take part in an interview
- to help decide if the interviewers need to make reasonable adjustments for you in a selection process to help with monitoring
- if they want to increase the number of disabled people they employ
- if they need to know for the purposes of national security checks

How to make a request for reasonable adjustments

There are various ways someone can make a reasonable adjustment request:

- in writing – for example in a letter or email
- in a meeting
- through a formal process, if the organisation has a process set up for requesting reasonable adjustments tools such as the [About | AXS Passport](#) can enable you to share what information you feel is relevant with a potential employer.

When making a reasonable adjustment request, factors to consider include:

- what would help you manage your application
- what might be possible and reasonable for the potential employer

What is reasonable depends on each situation, the potential employer must consider if the adjustment:

- will remove or reduce the disadvantage – by talking with the person and not making assumptions
- is practical to make
- is affordable
- could harm the health and safety of others

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE SEE:

[Disability rights: Employment - GOV.UK](#)

[Following discrimination law - Recruitment - Acas](#)

[Interviewing job applicants - Recruitment - Acas](#)

[Fact sheet 4: Making reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes and in the workplace | Mencap](#)

Frequently asked interview questions

It is difficult to predict exactly what an employer will ask you in an interview, however, there are some common interview questions you can prepare for.

1 TELL ME A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

This question is designed for the interviewer to learn more about who you are. Try to be concise but cover the most important points. Start with an overview of your experience, your education, and your ambitions. Remember to keep it relevant to the job you are being interviewed for.

An example might be

"I have recently graduated with a 2:2 from Salford University, during my degree I had placements in the prosthetics centre in Sheffield and the orthotics service in Nottingham. Whilst I enjoyed both my placements I was particularly drawn to orthotics due to the variety of patient pathways orthotics contributes to. I am keen to start gaining some experience as an orthotist and building on the knowledge I gained through my degree".

or

"I left school having completed my GCSEs and went straight into work. As my CV demonstrates I have significant experience of working in practical roles which are very hands on. I always work at my best when I am challenged to problem solve, and I enjoy helping others. I am looking for a role which will enable me to use my transferrable practical skills in a healthcare setting".

2 WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

This is a question you're almost guaranteed to get asked. Everybody has strengths and weaknesses. People often find it difficult to talk about their strengths. This is your opportunity to highlight your positive qualities. Be confident. You should know your own strengths and you need to let the interviewer know them too. However, a balance is required so be clear and confident with a willingness to learn and improve. If you really don't know your strengths then ask a friend or colleague beforehand. This question is an opportunity to provide examples of how you use your strengths to excel and how you work on areas you need to develop. This is an ideal opportunity to demonstrate a growth mindset.

Think how you might leverage your strengths to align with the key aspects of the role. Have two or three strengths to discuss at your interview. Phrase them well and practice them so you are confident when answering.

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Examples of strengths might include:

- Communication
- Creative
- Problem solver
- Honest
- Leadership skills
- Expert in a particular skill
- Analytical
- Attention to detail
- Empathetic
- Flexible
- Dedicated
- Team player
- Adaptable
- Determined
- Collaborative
- Passionate
- Patient
- Positive
- Writing skills
- Delegating

A sample response might include:

"My positive attitude is one of my strengths. I can view a situation from multiple perspectives and whilst acknowledging the challenges I can focus on the things that are in my gift to change. I have self-belief but I am always looking to learn and expand my knowledge".

When it comes to discussing your weaknesses the interviewer is gauging whether you are honest and self-aware. Are you able to see areas where you might need to develop and are you working on improving? Be honest while recognising that, once again, you need to maintain balance. Being overly self-critical is not the aim here. Self-awareness and a willingness to learn and develop is.

Examples of weaknesses might include:

- Being self-critical
- Over-focusing on details
- Having difficulty saying no
- Lacking confidence in certain situations
- Being uncomfortable with public speaking
- Hard time letting go of projects
- Having trouble asking for help

An example answer might include:

"I pride myself on being independent and I enjoy problem solving, this has sometimes meant I haven't asked for help when I needed to. I know there are experts within my organisation and when I have reached out I have produced better work, I am working on doing that more often".

3 WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE?

This question is related to short-term and long-term goals. Do you have a plan for your professional development? Are you committed to the role you are applying for or are you planning to leave in the short-term? This question requires a balance of knowing how you want to develop, having ambition to develop, being realistic yet optimistic with an emphasis on continued learning.

4 WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS ORGANISATION?

This is your opportunity to show that you have done your research and you know something about the organisation and why you want to work there. Take the time before the interview to find out what the organisation's goals and values are. Have a look at what they have achieved or what they are working towards. If you know who is going to be interviewing you, take the time to learn something about them. If you have been impressed by what the organisation or service has achieved or the values they stand for then this is the time to say it. Take a note of everything you like about the organisation or service and incorporate it into your answer. If there is very little information available about the company, you can always talk about the things you like about the profession and the job description. The key is to tailor your response to that role in that organisation.

5 DESCRIBE A CHALLENGING SITUATION YOU HAVE FACED AND HOW YOU DEALT WITH IT.

Try and tailor your examples to the job you are being interviewed for. If you don't have much of a work history, you can always use examples outside the work environment. Describe the situation and the steps you took to rectify the issue. Focus on the actions, solutions skills and learning you gained from the situation. This is an opportunity to demonstrate your problem-solving abilities, resilience, and ability to adapt to challenging situations. Using the STAR approach would be beneficial in providing a structured response that demonstrates your skill. It will also aid the interviewer in collecting objective data.

6 AS A GRADUATE PROSTHETIST/ORTHOTIST YOU MIGHT GET ASKED A CLINICAL QUESTION

If you get asked a clinical question it is likely that the interviewer is looking for your ability to provide a structured clinical plan and justification for your answer rather than a specific answer. Give yourself time to think, work through your answer logically. If you have a pen and paper to hand, use it to briefly jot down key points.

If you have been asked "how would you identify an acute Charcot foot". You might want to start with discussing the red flags, e.g., I'd be looking for changes in skin colour, temperature, and the position of the foot/ankle, if I suspected any risk I would seek the opinion of a senior colleague.

7 WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK ARE NEEDED FOR THIS ROLE?

This question is usually answered in the person specification which came with the job, be sure to familiarise yourself with it and be ready to discuss the key qualities listed. The most common qualities required for roles other than key qualifications and skills are communication, problem-solving, the ability to work in a team, leadership. the ability to show initiative, adapt, and be flexible.

8 WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU THINK MAKE A GOOD LEADER?

Consider leaders you have worked with that have had a positive impact on you. What did they do they do? Did they communicate clearly? Did they show passion for their work? Were they positive and encouraging? Did they respect the opinions of others and create an inclusive culture? Did they trust their colleagues? Did they give credit for the work done by other people? Did they give people opportunities to learn and grow? These are the type of things you should incorporate into your answer.

TOP TIP

Remember you're interviewing them as well as them interviewing you. You need to be sure this is the right organisation for you. Don't be afraid to ask questions.



9 WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT?

If you are a recent graduate or this is your first job you can share a wide range of non-professional achievements. This might include educational accomplishments, extracurricular activities, sporting achievements, personal achievements, charitable work or volunteering, and hobbies.

Prepare the answer to this question ahead of the interview. Create a list of your proudest achievements that you feel represent your work. Take the time to think about the times your work has been recognised or complimented. This could be a project you led, a promotion you achieved, an award you received. Reflect on the steps you took to reach the achievement. You might also want to reflect on what you learned from your achievement and how that learning has influenced you since.

10 DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR US?

Always have questions to ask the interviewers. This is your opportunity to ask the questions that are important to you. Taking a new job is a big decision and you have to make sure the job, the organisation, and the team you will be working with are right for you. It's worth considering two or three that you take with you to the interview. It's OK to have them written down.

If you are a prosthetist/orthotist it is important to know what clinical environment you will be working in. You might want to ask what the length of the appointments are, do they follow BAPO standards? What preceptorship programme can the organisation provide for you? How much protected time can they offer you for continued professional development? What is the structure of the team in terms of skill mix?

Questions which apply to all include questions on team culture, opportunities for progression, what support is available for continued learning, what resources are available to help you do your job, opportunities for flexible working. Don't be afraid to ask about pay or opportunities for promotion.

And don't worry if one or more of your questions are answered during the course of the interview. You can simply respond that you were going to ask about X, but that's been fully covered now, thank you.

TOP TIP

Remember the vast majority of communication is non-verbal. Your body language is vitally important. Use positive body language, such as good posture and eye contact. Try to relax and remember to smile.



Additional advice for international recruits

UNDERSTANDING THE UK LANDSCAPE

As an internationally educated recruit, navigating the field of prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) in the UK can be both an exciting and challenging journey. Understanding the structure of the industry, the regulatory requirements, and the processes involved in securing a job and visa will help you prepare for a successful career in the UK.

The UK's prosthetics and orthotics field encompasses a wide array of roles across both public and private sectors. Within the National Health Service (NHS), roles for P&O professionals span hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and community clinics, allowing for a wide range of clinical experiences.

The private sector also offers substantial opportunities for P&O professionals. Many private companies specialise in developing advanced prosthetic technologies, high-performance orthotic solutions, and custom-made devices that cater to patient-specific needs and expose one to cutting-edge advancements.

In terms of specialisation, P&O professionals in the UK can choose between prosthetics, orthotics, or a dual practice combining both areas.

The P&O industry in the UK is strictly regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to ensure the safety, quality, and efficacy of patient care. For internationally educated recruits, obtaining HCPC registration is mandatory before practising legally as a prosthetist or orthotist in the UK.

WHY HCPC REGISTRATION MATTERS

Registration with the HCPC is essential to practice legally in the UK. The HCPC's role is to safeguard patient safety and maintain high standards within the P&O field. The registration process ensures that all practitioners have met the required standards of education, clinical proficiency, and ethical conduct before working directly with patients. HCPC registration not only legitimises your practice but also reassures patients and employers of your competence and dedication to quality care.



STEPS IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION PROCESS

International recruits must complete the HCPC's international registration process, which involves several key steps to ensure your qualifications align with UK standards. The process generally includes:

Qualification Verification: The HCPC evaluates whether your educational qualifications are equivalent to UK-based qualifications in prosthetics and orthotics. This ensures that all professionals have the necessary foundation in P&O practices to meet UK standards.

Professional Experience: Applicants may be required to provide documentation of their professional experience, including work history, clinical skills, and any specific competencies in prosthetics or orthotics. This can be in the form of employment references, records of clinical work, and supervisor assessments.

English Language Proficiency: To work effectively in the UK, a high level of English proficiency is required. International recruits may need to provide proof of English proficiency, typically through exams like the IELTS or TOEFL. This is particularly important if your primary language is not English, as clear communication with patients and colleagues is essential for effective practice.

For more detailed information on the application process, visit [HCPC International Applications](#).

VISA AND WORK PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

To work legally in the UK, international recruits may need a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from an employer, which supports their work visa application. For prosthetists and orthotists, the Health and Care Worker Visa is the most relevant visa option. This visa category applies to Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), including those in the P&O field, and provides a streamlined route for obtaining work authorisation.

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR HEALTH AND CARE WORKER VISAS

Job's Occupation Code: For P&O roles, use occupation code 2259 – Other health professionals not elsewhere classified when applying for the Health and Care Worker Visa.

Eligibility and Requirements: The visa requires sponsorship from a licensed employer, so it's crucial to confirm the CoS availability when applying for jobs. This visa permits employment with the NHS or any other approved healthcare provider.

More details on the visa application and requirements are available on the [UK Health and Care Worker Visa page](#).

TOP TIP

At the end of your interview, consider asking: "What measures does your organisation have in place to ensure diversity and inclusivity within the team?" This question not only demonstrates your genuine interest in equity and inclusion but also helps you gauge the company's commitment to these values. It's a thoughtful way to show that you value a diverse and inclusive workplace.



PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

The interview process can be a daunting experience, especially if English is not your first language. Here are some strategies to help you succeed:

Practice Common Questions: Prepare for frequently asked questions in P&O interviews. Practising responses will help improve your fluency and confidence. (See page 11)

Listen Carefully: Don't hesitate to ask the interviewer to repeat a question if you need clarification. This demonstrates your commitment to clear communication, which is valued in the healthcare field.

Speak Clearly and Concisely: Focus on speaking clearly, even if you have a strong accent. The goal is to ensure understanding between you and the interviewer.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

If you're already in the UK, consider pursuing volunteer or shadowing opportunities while you search for a permanent position, and sign up for short courses and training opportunities. Here's how these experiences can benefit you:

Gain Insight into UK Practices: Volunteering to shadow clinics with NHS departments or private clinics can provide hands-on experience and insight into how P&O services operate in the UK as your placements were done abroad.

Build Your CV: These demonstrate your commitment to professional growth and enhance your resume.

Network with Local Professionals: Working in a volunteer capacity helps you build valuable connections with UK-based professionals, who may provide job leads or recommendations in the future.

IN CONCLUSION

Understanding the industry structure, registering with the HCPC, and familiarising yourself with the visa and job search processes are critical steps to ensure a smooth transition. By taking advantage of these resources and demonstrating your skills, dedication, and professionalism, you can build a rewarding career in the UK's P&O field. At an interview, you might wish to ask a prospective employer what mechanisms they have in place to support internationally qualified staff to settle into the UK healthcare context. Many will offer 'Preceptorship' programmes that provide individualised, structure support to help with these types of transitions

TOP TIP

Do not hesitate to contact recruiters to ask if they offer a certificate of sponsorship for an advertised job role. You might be the first to have such an opportunity



Mentoring

As well as preceptorship, and then a period of foundation support, mentoring can be a critical element in supporting you through the early stages of your career. Mentorship is a dynamic, supportive relationship between two people intended to develop the mentee within their current role or for the future. Mentoring provides guidance from experienced professionals who have already navigated the challenges you might be faced with. Their insights can help you avoid common pitfalls, make informed decisions, and accelerate your growth. Mentors also offer valuable feedback, helping you identify your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your personal and professional development.

In addition, mentoring builds your confidence, giving you a trusted advisor to turn to when you're uncertain. It helps you expand your network, opening doors to new opportunities and broadening your career horizons. Overall, having a mentor in your early career creates a platform for success by equipping you with the tools, support, and perspective needed to achieve your goals.

BAPO has a dedicated mentoring platform fully funded and exclusive to BAPO members. To access the mentoring platform please go to <https://bapo.onpld.com/> and follow the instructions to register an account.

THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A MENTOR

- The opportunity to learn, gain, and develop new skills and professional knowledge
- Guidance on professional development, career advancement, and personal goals
- Advice on identifying and developing strengths and overcoming weaknesses
- Learning with someone more experienced
- Gain impartial advice and an alternative perspective
- Have a non-judgemental sounding board on your ideas
- Developing professional networks
- Developing personal and professional growth



Advice from employers

Demonstrate a willingness to learn and to fit in with and add something to the existing team.

Employers want to have confidence in you and what you can bring to the team and the organisation. Keep things balanced regarding your strengths and areas for further development, but try to give them that confidence by being quietly and realistically confident yourself.

We have selected five experienced interviewers working in the prosthetics and orthotics profession and asked them a series of questions to help guide you through the process of searching for a job and navigating interviews.



Nikki Munro

Orthotics Clinical Lead/service manager



What advice would you give someone looking for a job in prosthetics and orthotics?

Do some research into the field and particularly into the service/locality you are considering working in so you know what the job might entail. Nothing is more off putting than asking someone why they want to work in P&O and its very obvious they have not taken the time to do any research. Always take time to talk to any informal contact, you get an early informal chance to impress and will learn a lot of good things that can help you prepare for an interview.

What advice would you give to someone preparing for an interview?

Read the job description and any list of knowledge and experience required carefully and make sure you provide answers to anything required in your application or statement of support otherwise you might not progress past the shortlisting stage.

What qualities do you look for in a potential new recruit?

Someone who has good communications skills and clearly has a caring person-centred attitude. Most jobs in P&O are all about how you build relationships with people not about the hardware we provide or the biomechanics we apply, so we always look beyond any technical skills to people skills. Technical skill can be taught, people skills are much harder to gain if you don't already have these.

What do you look for in a person's CV or job application?

Interesting things which show a bit of their personality and interests as well knowledge and skills. Try to get across what matters to you and what you are passionate about.

What advice would you give to someone who has been unsuccessful in an interview?

Ask for feedback and try to take this objectively, not personally. Take time to reflect and consider what you would do differently next time and write this down so that you remember.

Marion Billingham

Senior HR Business Partner



What advice would you give someone looking for a job in prosthetics and orthotics?

Be clear about why you want to go into the sector or that particular role. Does the role offer you the support and experience you need to give a grounding or the development opportunities for their future career?

What advice would you give to someone preparing for an interview?

Research the company, and, if appropriate, the service. Be clear about the company's values and think about the types of evidence you can provide to show that you meet their values. Always ensure you have some relevant questions to ask the interviewers, including things such as what support is available, what the approach to training is, and how the team works.

What qualities do you look for in a potential new recruit?

Evidence that they can use their communication skills to build relationships with a range of people, that they can work as part of a team, and that they have problem solving skills.

What do you look for in a person's CV or job application?

Have they proofread it? Is it free from spelling and grammatical errors? Have they ensured that they've included something apart from education and work experience, so the recruiter gets a sense of who they are as well as what they can do.

What advice would you give to someone who has been unsuccessful in an interview?

Reflect on the experience and the questions asked and look for learning points. Ask for feedback and reflect further on whether the role was right for you as well as being a fit for it.

Nick Gallogly

Consultant Orthotist



What advice would you give someone looking for a job in prosthetics and orthotics?

The first few years as a clinician are important in creating the foundations of learning and development. Do you research and look to work with a team that you think will give you the best start.

What advice would you give to someone preparing for an interview?

Research the service and the hospital you are visiting. Every organisation will have values that guide their approach to patient care – these values can be brought into some of your answers. Have some of your own questions prepared around preceptorship and development. Think about what skills you have that could add value to the service you are hoping to join.

What qualities do you look for in a potential new recruit?

I always look to see if the potential recruit is someone who can build fast relationships and can put other people at ease around them. How do they interact with the admin team when they arrive, do they arrive early? Do they have the ability to recognise their own weaknesses and most of all, are they eager to learn.

What do you look for in a person's CV or job application?

I look to see if the applicant has gone out of their way to get exposure to working in the industry. What do they enjoy outside of work? Are they part of a team sport? Are they dedicated to a particular interest they have? Having an interest outside of work is also very important.

What advice would you give to someone who has been unsuccessful in an interview?

Take the learning from it. Listen to any feedback and also understand that the factors of recruitment are not just based on you as an individual but also the existing individuals within the work space and trying to find the person that fits within and elevates the team.

Dave Gamble

Acting Head of Podiatry & Orthotics



What advice would you give someone looking for a job in prosthetics and orthotics?

Sign up to NHS jobs website for job alerts and check out the BAPO website for details of membership options and job alerts.

Social media can also be helpful to make connections and have conversations with those working in the profession.

Enquire about work experience if there is a particular company or location that you would like to get a job.

What advice would you give to someone preparing for an interview?

Read the job description and all supporting documents carefully, note down any questions or areas that you may need some support with.

Do some research on the organisation that you are applying to work with, have a look on their website particularly for any information around organisation values and use the contact details on the advert to get in touch and express your interest.

Finally, reflect on some recent experiences and what you learned from those situations, these could be useful examples to help answering interview questions.

What qualities do you look for in a potential new recruit?

Compassion, Problem solving, Personal responsibility, Trustworthy and Leadership

What do you look for in a person's CV or job application?

Attention to detail particularly around qualifications and employment history.

Evidence that the person has read and understood the job description and any supporting information, you may find it helpful to use the essential criteria in the personal specification to structure your supporting evidence.

Try to avoid very short or very long answers.

What advice would you give to someone who has been unsuccessful in an interview?

Following any interview, I recommend writing down all the questions that you can remember as soon as possible, so that you can review these questions and answers ahead of future interviews.

You may wish to ask for post interview feedback, think of a question that will help you learn what you can improve rather than focussing on why you were not successful.

If it is an internal interview, you may wish to ask about opportunities to help you develop.

Kay Purnell

Chair of The Orthotic Education Training Trust



What advice would you give someone looking for a job in prosthetics and orthotics?

Do you feel passionate about working within an NHS in-house team and if so, show that you have considered that the benefits of being based in one service, probably part of a big team is more 'you' than working in a contracted service for an orthotic provider, potentially covering several different clinics in different parts of a region as a more autonomous part of a larger team.

If you are interested in product design then maybe a company who produces custom & stock orthotics would be a good option.

Be sure you enjoy working with people - it's not just about treating patients; teamwork & collaboration with colleagues are essential.

If you are planning to work for a commercial provider, do your homework on the company you are joining - contact them to speak to an area manager / team lead to get a feel for the organisation before applying. Even better, get to speak with a current employee. If their website has a list of clinics you would try doing some background research from a customers perspective which you can recall in the meeting.

As an applicant you are often in a good position as it's a 'sellers market' - many companies are constantly recruiting due to the lack of clinicians in the marketplace.

What advice would you give to someone preparing for an interview?

Really understand your own 'strengths' based on experience to date so that you can talk about them passionately - both P&O related from a placement or during the course maybe, and also personal from engagement in sports / hobbies / part time job etc... And then be able to relate these strengths to why it would make you a good clinician in that organisation.

Prepare STAR based responses.

If there are some things that you already know you want from the role / have aspirations then ask questions to make sure they are available to you: if you want to do research - has the organisation got evidence of doing any before; if you want a mix of private patients & NHS patients - is this possible with this organisation ; if you're interested in managing a team - what chance is there to achieve this etc...

Have some questions ready for the interviewer - such as:

- asking about training opportunities;
- the organisations plans for service development;
- what opportunity is there to work in a preferred area of practice such as paediatric /neuro / diabetes etc..

Don't be afraid to ask about the 5 yr plan for the organisation which implies you have an interest in a longer term career in P&O.

Kay Purnell

Chair of The Orthotic Education Training Trust



What qualities do you look for in a potential new recruit?

As a PO clinician you will need to be personable to interact with patients, orthotic admin staff, technicians; other AHPs in MDTs showing good examples of how the interviewee has worked effectively with others previously (either professionally or in their personal life) is important.

Resourceful / shows initiative - every patient is different and requires an individual approach so being resourceful in a) coming up with appropriate goals for the patient b) design / choice of product c) encouraging the patient to wear/use d) being enthusiastic about the outcome etc.. is a good skill to have.

An interest in developing themselves or the service they are joining.

What do you look for in a person's CV or job application?

- Relevant placements
- Shown initiative
- Any awards from uni / college / personal life
- That they have tailored the application to the role they are applying for / organisation they are looking to join
- What references they are happy to share

What advice would you give to someone who has been unsuccessful in an interview?

- Ask for a debrief 'in person' on the phone or on teams vs in writing.
- Consider why you think you might not have been successful and ask about this specifically as well as listen to the feedback during the debrief .
- Ask when the organisation will next be recruiting.

Useful contacts and resources

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF PROSTHETISTS AND ORTHOTISTS

Web: www.bapo.com

Email: enquiries@bapo.com

NHS JOBS

Web: www.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/search

Web: www.nhsjobs.com

NHS SCOTLAND JOBS

Web: <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE JOBS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Web: <https://jobs.hscni.net/>

UK GOVERNMENT ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

Web: www.gov.uk





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