



British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists

GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICE

*No 1: The Role of the
Prosthetist / Orthotist*

BEST CLINICAL PRACTICE IN ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS

General Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to reflect current best practice in clinical orthotics and prosthetics in order that the individual practitioner achieves and maintains the highest standards of professionalism and effectiveness in patient care. They are intended to be a general guide to recommended professional behaviour in all routine daily employment activities.

Your professional body has a vital role in setting and promoting standards that must have quality at their core. With healthcare standards subject to continuous quality improvements these guidelines will undergo monitoring and periodic revision.

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) is committed to the following quality principles in professional practice:

- The pursuit of evidence-based practice.
- Involvement in quality improvement processes (e.g. clinical audit).
- Professional development programmes which reflect clinical governance principles.
- Dissemination of (evaluated) good practice ideas and innovations.
- The systematic learning of lessons for clinical practice from patient complaints.
- The promotion of universal validated clinical guidelines and their systematic controlled implementation.

BAPO, in liaison with appropriate bodies, will approve the development of the guidelines to produce national or local standards. The Association may also issue individual Guidelines or Recommendations on specific areas of prosthetic and orthotic practice.

These guidelines are critical to current arrangements which allow BAPO to build on and strengthen the existing system of professional self-regulation.

This document is subject to revision by the Professional Affairs Committee of BAPO and enquiries regarding its contents should be addressed in the first instance to its chairperson.

Other Guidelines in this Series:

1. The Role of the Prosthetist/Orthotist
2. Communication and Teamwork
3. Clinical Records
4. Assessment and Review
5. The Clinical Environment
6. Clinical Effectiveness

The Role of the Prosthetist / Orthotist

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1. Statement

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) regards the state-registered orthotist, prosthetist or prosthetist/orthotist as a competent health care provider with a definitive, exclusive and unique role in the multidisciplinary treatment of patients.

2. Introduction

The aim of this document is to explain the role of the prosthetist/orthotist as he or she currently works in the United Kingdom. As well as the practising clinician it should also be of particular interest to the prosthetic/orthotic student, healthcare professional or patient. Some of the following is derived from the document 'Report of the United Nations Interregional Seminar on Standards for the Training of Prosthetists, Holte, Denmark, 1968.'

3. Professional Role

The practitioner will

- 3.1 abide by the Statement of Conduct and the Ethical Code of the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine
- 3.2 be committed to continuing professional development and the maintenance of a high standard CPD Portfolio
- 3.3 be aware of current pertinent research and development in the field
- 3.4 be familiar with local policies for clinical risk management, basic life support, manual handling, infection control and child protection
- 3.5 contribute to audit processes

4. The Multidisciplinary Team

The practitioner will

- 4.1 give professional advice to the team regarding appropriate prosthetic and orthotic prescription, specification, design and sourcing
- 4.2 participate in the evaluation of the final design, including assessments of fit, function and cosmesis
- 4.3 document pertinent information in the patient's clinical records and/or log information on an electronic data base
- 4.4 assist in pre- and post-operative management of the patient
- 4.5 participate in multidisciplinary research and audit

5. Provision of Orthoses / Prostheses

The practitioner will

- 5.1 undertake a clinical assessment and examination of the patient
- 5.2 use measurement and data acquisition techniques to record all pertinent information
- 5.3 perform positive model rectifications as appropriate
- 5.4 specify the design, componentry, materials, fabrication method and suppliers of orthoses and prostheses
- 5.5 undertake the fitting and static and dynamic alignment of orthoses and prostheses
- 5.6 evaluate the completed device on the patient to ensure the desired quality of fit, function, cosmesis and workmanship
- 5.7 re-evaluate the above following an agreed time interval (review appointments)
- 5.8 provide verbal, visual and written information and explanation at every stage of device provision
- 5.9 advise on the activities of technical support personnel
- 5.10 assist training of technical support personnel
- 5.11 participate in quality assurance systems as necessary

6. Further Information

We hope that you have found these guidelines helpful and that they will aid your own assessment of your current practice. Further information is available from the BAPO Secretariat. This guidance is regularly reviewed and we welcome your comments.

BAPO Secretariat
Sir James Clark Building
Abbey Mill Business Centre
Paisley PA1 1TJ

Tel: 0141 561 7217
Fax: 0141 561 7218
Email: admin@bapo.com
Web site: <http://www.bapo.com>

Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are taken from international standard **ISO 8549-1 : 1995**

- **prosthesis: prosthetic device:** Externally applied device used to replace, wholly or in part, an absent or deficient limb segment. (Note: It includes any such device having a part within the human body for structural or functional purposes.)
- **orthosis: orthotic device:** Externally applied device used to modify the structural or functional characteristics of the neuro-muscular and skeletal systems.
- **prosthetics:** Science and art involved in treating patients by the use of *prostheses*.
- **orthotics:** Science and art involved in treating patients by the use of *orthoses*.
- **prosthetist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *prostheses*.
- **orthotist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *orthoses*.
- **prosthetist/orthotist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *orthoses* and *prostheses*.

Note: State registration in the UK requires the practitioner to be registered with the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine.