INTRODUCTION
The prosthetic-orthotic degree is recognized as a broad undifferentiated degree requiring the acquisition of general knowledge and basic skills in all applicable domains of medicine. The education of a prosthetist-orthotist requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment through patient care experience in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in practice. The current practice of prosthetics and orthotics therapy emphasizes collaboration among other allied health care professionals, the patient, and the patient’s family and caregiver.

POLICY
The University of Washington Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent prosthetists-orthotists. As an accredited program, the University of Washington curriculum in Prosthetics-Orthotics adheres to the standards and guidelines of the National Commission on Prosthetics and Orthotics Education. Within these guidelines, the University of Washington Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection and evaluation of its students, the design, implementation, and evaluation of its curriculum, and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement but also on non-academic factors, which serve to insure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation.

The Division has the responsibility to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent and caring practitioners, capable of doing benefit and not harm. Thus, it is important that persons admitted possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice prosthetics and orthotics.

The Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics, as part of the University of Washington, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. The Division does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran status. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with disabilities.

PROGRAM
Technical standards, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the development of professional attributes required by the faculty of all students at graduation. The essential abilities required by the curriculum are in the following areas: motor, sensory, communication, intellectual (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and patient assessment) and the behavioral and social aspects that impact the performance of a prosthethist-orthotist.

The University of Washington Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics curriculum requires essential abilities in information acquisition. The student must have the ability to master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, written material, and projected images, and be able to seek and synthesize information from appropriate and varied sources. The student must also have the ability to recognize his/her own limits, both personally and related to their skill in and knowledge of prosthetics-orthotics.
The student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty. These skills may be described as the ability to comprehend, memorize, analyze and synthesize material and to do so in a timely manner. He/she must be able to discern and comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and be able to develop reasoning and decision making skills appropriate to the practice of prosthetics-orthotics.

The student must have the ability to take and document, in a patient’s record, an appropriate history, and perform a physical examination. Such tasks require the ability to communicate with the patient and family. The student must also be capable of perceiving the signs of disease, especially neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction, as manifested through the physical examination. Such information is derived from observation and palpation of the body surfaces. The student must have the ability to discern skin, subcutaneous masses, muscles, bones, and joints.

A major component of the practice of prosthetics-orthotics is the assessment and management of movement disorders. Therefore, the student must have the ability, within reasonable limits, to safely assist a patient in moving, for example, from a chair to a bed.

The student must also have the ability to move him- or herself and the patient in three-dimensional space in order to perform motor function tests. Additionally, the student must be able to ensure the physical safety of a patient at all times.

The student must be able to communicate effectively with patients and family, physicians and other members of the health care team. The communication skills require the ability to assess all information including the recognition of the significance of non-verbal communication, and immediate assessment of information provided to allow for appropriate, well-focused patient care. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences.

The student must be able to understand the basis and content of ethical prosthetics-orthotics practice. He/she must possess attributes, which include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility and tolerance. He/she must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment, which may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.

The student must have sufficient body muscle coordination to practice safe use of hand and machine tools necessary for technical implementation in the fabrication process.

These essential functions of prosthetic-orthotics education identify the requirements for admission, retention and graduation of applicants and students respectively at the University of Washington Division of Prosthetics-Orthotics. Graduates are expected to be qualified to enter the prosthetic-orthotic profession. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request those accommodations that he/she feels are reasonable and are needed to execute the essential requirements described.